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PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Lawmaker tells politicians: Stop muddling tape issue

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GMA advised: Defer VAT

But Palace says no action yet on Salceda's proposal

By Michael Lim Ubac and Christine O. Avendaño

AMID SURGING oil prices, an economic adviser has urged President Macapagal-Arroyo to defer the implementation of the 10-per cent expanded valued-added tax should the Supreme Court lift the freeze order on the VAT law.

The tribunal is expected to lift the temporary restraining order this month.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda yesterday said that since the freeze order was lifted, "the administration will exhaust means to legally postpone the effects of the VAT on items harvest of global oil prices rose to $59 (per barrel) which we believe it would be colorable."

Implementing the VAT law will further raise the prices of fuel, electricity and a host of other products and services.

Salceda, one of the President's economic advisers, warned that at $67 per barrel of crude, the pump price of unleaded gasoline could easily exceed P40 a liter "even with mitigating measures."

Crude prices rose to $67.10 a barrel in New York Friday, up at least 60 percent since August 2004, prompting the Arroyo administration to plan to urge the public to conserve energy.

But Rigoberto Tiglao, Presidential Management Staff chief, said last night that Salceda's proposal seemed only half because of the oil crisis.

"The issue on the economy (is) just," Tiglao said in a text message to the Inquirer, as he noted that the subject was still "more and academic at this point since there's a temporary restraining order."

The Supreme Court suspended the implementation of the VAT law, the cornerstone of the President's economic reform agenda, on July 1 just hours after it took effect because of petitions seeking its nullification.

Tiglao said Salceda had offered his proposal only in foreign Secretary Raphael Lotilla. It was "very, very preliminary," the MPM chief said.

But Salceda, the House of Representatives' economic expert, said he had already briefed the President on the consequences of pushing through with the VAT. "She has not yet voted on her. My personal guess? She would be open to it."

He said the administration should not be cowed by the threat of another downgrade from credit rating agencies. "We just have to endure a time. Let's not be too afraid (of them)."

Three international rating agencies—Standard & Poor's, Fitch Ratings and Moody's Investors Service—have downgraded the country's credit rating in the past two years.

Salceda said the government could also tap the windfall from the oil price hike to help cushion the impact of the VAT.

The Department of Finance has estimated the windfall at P30 billion.

Tiglao said Salceda's proposal was "interesting" and "worth considering."

DIVING DIVES
Five young boys take turns jumping into the Lobo River in Batad from an overhanging rainwater tree. The river is a popular destination for tourists who pay to watch the boys perform. ERIK CASTRO/REUTERS

Bishops say impeach bid must go on despite pain

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau
and Christine O. Avendaño
in Manila

THE INCOMING president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) wants the impeachment proceedings against President Macapagal-Arroyo to continue, "no matter how painful they may be."

"I hope that everybody—congressmen, senators as well as our President—will stand to the truth," Bishop Archbishop Angel Lagdameo told reporters in Cebu City after this commissioning the 22th anniversary of his episcopal consecration on Friday.

Lagdameo said the CBCP was standing by its earlier position that the political crisis could be resolved either through a truth commission or the impeachment or voluntary resignation of Mrs. Arroyo.

In a separate interview, Cebu archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, who was among those who attended the commemoration, called on legislators to continue the impeachment proceedings.

"I hope the impeachment would go on because it's the only way we will know the truth as far as the Constitution is concerned. We hope that our congressmen will not stop the impeachment process," Vidal said.

Several impeachment complaints have been filed against the President, accusing her of culpable violation of the Constitution, corruption and fraud in connection with the presidential election last year.

On Wednesday, the House committee on justice suspended its first hearing on the impeachment complaints because of lack-voting over procedures. It is expected to resume its hearing on Tuesday to start determining whether the complaints are sufficient in form.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said last week that the President and her men were going their all to prevent Mr. Arroyo from being impeached.

Lianne Rhonda Woodroof, intern/inq7.net, contributed to this report.

Senga takes over as GMA's 8th military chief of staff

SENGA: Incoming AFP chief of staff vows to continue Abu Sayyaf campaign

By Luige A. del Puerto, Doris Pizaldagin and TJ Burgonio

LT. GEN. Generoso Senga, a tough rebel fighter who earned as the voice of the military during the reigns of President Joseph Estrada, takes over a restive military today amid demands by some ruling-party officials for a purge of officials implicated in allegations President Macapagal-Arroyo cheated in last year's election.

Senga will replace Gen. Efren Abu, whose retirement as Armed Forces chief of staff was delayed for 11 days by Mrs. Arroyo as she battled to overcome the worst political crisis of her 4-year-old presidency.

The Army commanding general becomes the eighth military chief appointed by Mrs. Arroyo, a record for a sitting president. A member of Philippine Military Academy Class of 1972, the 55-year-old Senga will be AFP chief for less than a year, retiring on July 23, 2006.

Senga had served as AFP Southern Command chief, as commander of the 6th Infantry Division, he led the campaign against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front that led to the capture of its base at the Camp Abubakar Complex in Central Mindanao.

He was also AFP spokesperson during the "people power" revolt against Estrada in 2001.

Senga said in a brief interview on Friday that he would continue Abu's policy of keeping the 130,000-strong AFP "apolitical" in the current political controversy.

"He is a very capable, soft-spoken officer," said a classmate-turned-yearmate by the Southern Luzon Command. "He's for clear rules and managerial style, he

(CONTINUED ON A14)

Acclaimed writer pines for revolution

AWARD-WINNING writer F. Sionil Jose: We will either implode or explode.

AFTER five decades spent skewering the Philippine social order with his writings, the 80-year-old Frantisek Sionil Jose could be forgiven for slowing down.

It quickly becomes clear that that is not the case as he intently dissects the current meltdown of Metro Manila's bookshops after another day's outing in the study above.

"I wish we could have a revolution," he sighs over a meal at his favorite Korean restaurant next door. "I've been waiting for one [but] "I've been waiting for one [but] still no life."

Sionil Jose's novels depicting the struggles of ordinary Filipinos have been translated into 28 languages, earning him numerous awards and talk of a possible Nobel prize.

But his enduring frustration is that at home, where millions of Filipinos are more literate, reading their own words than ever reading literature, he remains "just an old writer" who has watched the country slip ever deeper into poverty and corruption.

For him, the recent political turbulence—the allegations of election fraud against President Macapagal-Arroyo is merely the latest squabble among a ruling oligarchy that has consistently betrayed the Ilustrado Catholic nation.

"All the things she has done are for herself, no state or patriotic line that is true of almost all our leaders," said Sionil Jose, bald and short but looking much younger than his years.

"There is one thing that's missing here. The Koreans have a

(CONTINUED ON A14)

There's life after Gloria and 'Hello Garci' tapes

By Amanda Doronila

ANALYSIS

(CONTINUED ON A14)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2005
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

BATTLE FOR MANILA REMEMBERED

'One of WWII's greatest tragedies'

THE BATTLE for Manila lasted just 28 days. When it ended on March 3, 1945, over 100,000 civilians were dead and the city known as the Pearl of the Orient had been reduced to rubble.

A CAUSA passes in front of what that were once the Philippine Legislature after the end of the fighting between US troops and Japanese occupation forces for control of Manila. The photo belongs to the Edgar Kruto Picture Collection. Kruto was a One man who was born and lived in the Philippines.

Six months after seven-by-seven fighting and US bombardment, had leveled the once-proud city the vessels of ensuing flesh still trapped in the capitol, according to those who survived the ordeal.

"The destruction of Manila was one of the greatest tragedies of World War II. Of all the allied capitals only Warsaw suffered more," wrote American historian William Manchester.

Benito Legarda, who was 18 years old at the time, said the Japanese forces occupying the city since Jan. 2, 1942, took out of their way to make life unbearable since they realized the US military was advancing to recap-ture the city.

"They destroyed bridges, destroyed utilities and murdered civilians... There was no reason for what took place in Manila in those 28 days... none at all," Legarda said.

Tales of men, women and children being assembled up and shot, murdered, raped, decapitated or bayoneted by Japanese troops paint the period as one of the darker episodes in the closing stages of World War II.

By the end of 1944, the tide had turned for Japan and its conquest of Southeast Asia.

On Oct. 20, Gen. Douglas MacArthur, the Allied commander in the Far East, invaded the eastern Philippines in the biggest land and sea assault of the Pacific War with nearly 200,000 men and 700 ships.

MacArthur, who had vowed "I shall return" when he abandoned the Philippines for Australia more than two years earlier, waded ashore, came, the second time for the benefit of the newsreels—to tell the people of the Philippines in a radio broadcast that he had kept his promise.

At the same time, the US Navy with her allies took on what was left of the Imperial Japanese Navy in the biggest sea battle in history (the Battle of Leyte Gulf).

Race against time

For MacArthur, it was a race against time to liberate Manila and Luzon where thousands of Americans soldiers had been interned since the surrender of US and Filipino troops in May 1942.

University of the Philippines historian Ricardo Jose said the Americans surprised the Japanese when they invaded the city from the north on Feb. 3, 1945.

"The Japanese destroyed all the bridges that crossed the Pasig River, which divides the city north and south, and began torching the Chinese quarter and the old business district of Intramuros," he said.

"Basically the city had to be taken building by building, street by street. It was hard-to-hand in some quarters, tank and artillery bombardment in others."

Connected by tunnels

"What made the fighting difficult for the Americans was the fact that many of the major buildings were connected by tunnels. So when the Americans thought they had cleared one building and moved on to the next the Japanese would pop up again and attack them from the rear," Jose said.

After 28 days, on March 3, the last Japanese resistance collapsed. Figures of military casualties vary enormously with estimates as high as 22,000 dead.

Jose said some 1,000 American died and 4,000 were wounded, with more than 8,000 Japanese dead. "Most of the garrison was wiped out in the fighting," he said.

No white flag surrender

"There was no white flag surrender. The fighting just stopped when the last pocket of resistance had been cleared. Thousands of Japanese civilians that were brought in to run the country were taken prisoner along with Japanese troops who had surrendered.

"So for Manila, it was it was it," he said.

Much of the damage was caused by the US bombardment, Jose Ma. Bonifacio Saenda says in his book, "Pearl of Asia: The Rape of Manila."

"Not all the buildings were destroyed by the Japanese and not all the massacres were perpetrated by them. Much destruction and many deaths were caused by American bombing from the air and shelling by artillery."

Saenda says Filipinos were often mistaken for Japanese and were shot by American troops or treated and bombed by their allies.

Negative fractions of the International Historical Institute said much of the blame for what happened in Manila was placed on Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita, commander of the Japanese forces in the Philippines.

"Yamashita had pulled out of Manila in December 1944 well before the massacre began," he told AFP.

"He left strict orders that the city be spared and for all troops to leave Manila, saying it could not be defended.

Real butcher of Manila

"The real butcher of Manila was Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi of the Imperial Japanese Manila Naval Defense Force who disobeyed Yamashita's orders and decided to fight to the bitter end. He was killed in the battle."

Iwabuchi was executed in February 1946 following a trial in which he was accused of "violating the laws of war for failing to control his troops."

"There is a lot of conflicting views of what happened in the lead up to the Battle for Manila. It is true Yamashita had withdrawn to northern Luzon ahead of the American troops," Jose said.

No intention of leaving

"But it is clear from the records the Japanese had no intention of leaving Manila and had dug in for a long fight fortifying the city and its approaches. Most of those troops were under the command of Admiral Iwabuchi."

Legarda said the rape of Manila was committed by a desperate Japanese army reeling defeat in the face.

"The killings took many forms. Sometimes they shot civilians or bayoneted them to death. Some were beheaded. Sometimes families or groups were herded into buildings and blasted with hand grenades.

"Women were raped and dived with bayonets from groin to throat and left to bleed to death in the hot sun.

"Children were seized by the legs and had their heads bashed against the wall. Babies were tossed into the air and caught on bayonets. Infants' breasts were gouged out with bayonets from pregnant women."

Lucky survivors

Although his immediate family were among the lucky survivors, Legarda said one of his uncles and a cousin were beheaded by the Japanese.

Like many who survived, Legarda has written extensively about his experiences growing up during the occupation of Manila and its subsequent

'One of WWII's greatest tragedies'

From page A1

destruction.

In his book, "Liberation 45," he includes eyewitness accounts to some of the atrocities that took place.

One was of Hungarian baller star Paul Szihard, who described how from his hospital bed he heard a strange "squelching" sound coming up from the street.

"To his horror he found it was the sound of bodies being run over by Japanese vehicles," Legarda said.

Szihard wrote that just 30 tubes the battle for Manila began.

"I guess we were luckier than most. Our family remained together but others were torn apart in the chaos that followed," he recalls.

Few privileges

Born in Manila of German parents, Krahe said: "Despite the alliance between Germany and Japan, we were granted few privileges. The Japanese didn't like anyone who was not Japanese.

"I remember seeing one man, his stomach sliced open by a piece of shrapnel, sitting down in the street trying to put his intestines back.

"You tried to survive one day at a time. You dodged the bullets and hoped the building you were seeking refuge in was not bombed."

Terrible atrocities

"Terrible atrocities took place all over the city.

"I will never forget one night in the building opposite, there was a woman screaming. The horror in that scream has never left me. It was horrible.

"We were told the woman was being repeatedly gang-raped by Japanese soldiers.

"Next morning her body was thrown out on the street."

Krahe said a degree between his father and a brother probably saved his family.

"On Feb. 10, 1945, some 200 to 300 Filipinos, including some Germans and Spanish, had gone to the German Club on San Luis Street in Manila's Ermita district. They had gone there because they thought it was safe.

"Some sought shelter in an air raid shelter under the club while others stayed inside."

Krahe's family stayed their possessions at the club but that afternoon had gone to visit an old apartment that had been ransacked to see if anything was left.

"About noon, a platoon of Japanese marines ordered all the club personnel and started killing everyone in sight.

"They murdered people inside the club, including Germans, and fired their weapons into the air-raid shelter. Those they poured petrol into the shelter and set it alight.

"Those who tried to escape were gunned down...only 10 survived the massacre," he says.

Today, in the old walled city of Intramuros, between the Manila Cathedral and San Agustin Church, a bronze sculpture mounted on a black granite slab by artist Perez de Guzman stands in memory of those who perished in the city.

It is a stark monument full of painful imagery. At its centre is a woman carrying a dead infant representing the Philippines, the child being a symbol of lost hope.

A female figure next to her depicts a rape victim. The figure of a man shows despair and exhaustion. At the monument's feet are the bodies of young boys symbolizing the country's lost youth.

But for many young Filipinos today, the events that took place in Manila 60 years ago have little significance or impact on their lives.

Every day hundreds of young Filipinos queue outside the Japanese Embassy in Manila for visas or work in Japan, but for older residents, like Krahe, the nightmare has never left them.

"You can never forget what it was like," he says. "You can't erase it from your memory." —AFP

SMOKE billows over parts of Manila from fires set by the battles between US and Japanese forces as the close of World War II. In the end, over 100,000 civilians died and the city known as the Pearl of the Orient was reduced to rubble.

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Fil-Canadian in drug tunnel nabbed

US AUTHORITIES have arrested and charged a Filipino-Canadian man and two of his friends with allegedly building a tunnel under the American and Canadian border which they intended to use to smuggle prohibited drugs.

The Filipino Reporter (www.filipinoreporternews.com), a US-based Filipino newspaper, said Jonathan Sidenstricker, 37, and fellow immigrants Timothy Wise, a 39-year-old Chinese, and Francis Fernandez Raj, a 39-year-old Indian, were arrested for smuggling 95 pounds of marijuana into the US.

They were charged on July 28 with conspiracy to distribute and import marijuana before the US District Court in Seattle, Washington, the newspaper reported.

A Ong Zubiaverson Arimorena, [illegible] apparently referring to Seattle was quoted as describing the tunnel as "well-built" and "one of the most sophisticated" in the US.

The tunnel starts on the Canadian side in Hopk property in Surrey, British Columbia, where Sidenstricker also lives. It ends on the US side, underneath the living room floor of a house in Lynden, Washington.

Abdon Olarte

Acclaimed writer pines for revolution

Continued on page A-3

nature of nations ... the same thing with Japan. That's what I want Filipinos to understand, that our resources are the oligarchy."

From patriot to martial law

Nick's years, the novel "Brandon" says follows the trials of a family through several generations from 1872, when colonial Spain's public garrotting of three Filipino Catholic priests galvanized the independence movement, to the imposition of martial law by dictator Ferdinand Marcos 100 years later.

At the final book, "Mass," a young descendant of the revolutionaries arrives in Manila's notorious Tondo slum and discovers his political identity under the squalor, just filmmakers away from the rich, gated communities of the Makati business district. The modern reader is struck by how little has changed.

Indeed, says Gastil Jose, the poor today are even worse off.

Quixote by street light

Growing up in his hometown in Occidental Philippines, he remembers being as poor he had to read Don Quixote under a street lamp to save on fuel.

But the people there always had two meals a day. Now many have to survive on one. They call it "almusal"—close for "almusal" (breakfast), "tanghalian" (lunch) and "hapunan" (dinner).

"If all those rich Filipinos brought their money back into the country[,] we wouldn't have these problems today. It's common sense. The problem with any developing country is capital formation," said Gastil Jose.

"Sometimes I get very angry."

Despite his frustrations, Gastil Jose has not lost faith in his country's ability to change its destiny and reverse the "second decay" that he says is the legacy of colonization by Spain, the United States and Japan.

Change through violence?

To do so, Filipinos must draw on past figures, such as national hero Jose Rizal and Nicanor Antonio Magsaysay who, he says, are proof there is nothing innately corrupt or untrustworthy about Filipino leaders.

"If you have a strong leader like Magsaysay, you can wipe corruption out," he said. "Politicians need to tell their land to become politicians."

But change, when it comes, may not be peaceful.

"One thing is sure—this country will either implode or explode," Gastil Jose said. "There's a lot of cynicism now. That's very dangerous because all of our institutions, including the Church, are no longer believed in." Reuters

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Fairmont Hotels & Resorts

Raffles Hotels & Resorts

Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts

Ritz-Carlton Hotels & Resorts

Conrad Hotels & Resorts

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Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts

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Ombudsman clears GMA, others in jailing of kids

By Nelson F. Flores

THE OFFICE of the Ombudsman has absolved President Macapagal-Arroyo and three other officials from any liability in the questionable practice of jailing children together with hardened criminals.

In an 11-page order dated June 13, the Office of the Ombudsman, through Deputy Ombudsman for Luzon Pedro Arbonadas, junked the class suit filed against Ms Arroyo, Interior Secretary Angelo Reyes, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao.

The suit was filed on Dec. 10, 2003 by five children who were made to join adult prisoners in various Central Police District (CPD) fire-controlled jails in Quezon City before a local court ordered their turnover to the Bureau of Jail Management and Penology.

Arbonadas, in dismissing the suit, said the President and the other officials were far removed from the abuses committed against the child prisoners and could not have been aware of the violations committed by the PNP against the children. He also brushed aside as "speculative" the children's complaint that their suffering during incarceration with adult prisoners amounted to "undue injury" which is penalized under the anti-graft law.

Lawyer Federico Capasna, who represented the children, said the Ombudsman's order would set off more abuses on child prisoners.

He said the President's "acquiescence to and criminal neglect" in stopping the practice made her liable for prosecution under the provisions of Republic Act No. 3019 (the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act).

Citing statistics from the Public Attorney's Office and Sen. Panfilo Pangilinan, Capasna said between 26 and 34 children, including girls and those with mental disabilities, were thrown to with adult prisoners every single day in police jails throughout the country.

The CNN news network last week released a damaging report on child prisoners in the Philippines.

INQUIRER REPORTER LAUDED President Macapagal-Arroyo hands over the IWCC Reporter of the Year trophy to the Inquirer's Christian V. Esguerra. Esguerra was cited during the 7th anniversary celebration of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption headed by its chair Bienvenido Abante (left) at Malacañang.

Cops to MILF: Provide info on bombers

By Luige A. del Puerto

TROYLAGE yesterday urged the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front to share any information it may have that could lead to the arrest of the perpetrators of last week's carnbombings in Zamboanga City.

The police, however, insisted they had arrested the right suspects in the bomb attacks.

"If they have good information to contribute to the investigation, we would welcome it," said Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bacnil, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police.

"It would also be good if their information is supported by evidence," he said.

The MILF had expressed doubts that the three bombing suspects now in police custody were members of the rebel group, an extremist group with links to the Indonesian-based terrorist group Jemaah Islamiyah.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, had named the Adonan Hadawang, 33; Angen Sumael, 32, and Rhonnie Islangin, 21, were not on the list of terrorists submitted to the government.

"We believe in the operation conducted by our men. We'll let the courts decide on the merits of the case," Bacnil said.

Witnesses pointed to the three as the ones who placed a bomb in a parked vehicle in the city.

Yesterday, Bacnil said there had been no definite report from the field about the true identities of the detained suspects in the blasts.

"But there is also no report that they have been disowned by the Abu Sayyaf," he said.

Chief Supt. Ismael Rubiran, head of the PNP-Intelligence Group, earlier said the intelligence that the Zamboanga bombings were meant to divert the authorities' attention away from pursuing Abu Sayyaf leader Khadaffy Janjalani, who is believed to be hiding out in the Lanao del Norte-Bukidnon area.

"Janjalani thought it would distract, get or rescue troops from pursuing him," Rubiran said. "He was wrong."

NLEx bans trucks that are too heavy

STARTING Aug. 16, overloaded trucks and trailers will no longer be allowed on the North Luzon Expressway. Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC) announced yesterday.

MNTC said patrol officers will strictly implement the ban on overloaded trucks and trailers in compliance with Republic Act No. 4136, also known as the Motor Vehicles Users Charge (MVUC) law.

"We are limiting the rail of several sections to make the expressway safe for all motorists," said Raul Ignacio. MNTC president and vice president for operations and maintenance.

Ignacio said trucks will be weighed and if found to exceed the prescribed limits, the trucks will have to leave the expressway.

"We are enforcing a national law that was approved in 2003. Our patrol officers have the necessary equipment—portable scales—to check trucks for overloading," he said.

Under RA 4136 or the MVUC law, overloaded trucks and trailers will be fined an amount equivalent to 25 percent of the MVUC, or P50 per axle for its trucks.

The maximum allowable gross vehicle weight (GVW) for trucks and trailers is based on the maximum allowable axle load of 13,500 kgs or 13.5 metric tons.

The six-wheeler trucks, for instance, allowable GVW is 30,000 kg; for 10-wheeler trucks, 27,200 kg; for 14-wheeler trucks, 23,750 kg; for 18-wheeler and 14-wheeler semi-trailer trucks, 39,200 kg; for 14-wheeler semi-trailer trucks, 37,800 kg; for 14-wheeler and 18-wheeler trailer trucks, 36,450 kg; 18-wheeler trailer trucks, 36,000 kg and 37,800 kg; and 22-wheeler trailer trucks, 45,000 kg.

Ignacio said three portable weighing scales would be positioned at strategic locations along the NLEx 84.km. stretch.

The Department of Transportation and Communications and the Department of Public Works and Highways also announced that they would likewise implement the anti-overloading campaign on all national roads.

Lawmaker tells politicians …

From page A1

"Let's stop the battle of the tapes. Both camps are claiming that their authentication findings are better than the other. This is adding confusion to an already complicated situation," Bunye (the Rep. Isabel Oreta) said.

Bunye also asked the appeal after opposition lawmakers determined the claims of Environment Secretary Michael Defensor that the "Hello Garci" tapes submitted by the opposition to the impeachment proceedings against President Macapagal-Arroyo had been altered.

"Let's give due respect to the committee's impeachment hearings which already began last week," said Bunye, adding: "The findings from both sides are under a cloud of doubt regardless of the strength of their technical experts because they were commissioned by the parties."

"It would be better if the administration and the opposition would allow the impeachment process to go on unimpeded by all the political noise."

Bunye also said the issue "is best taken to publicity to build their cases for and against Ms Arroyo." "was muddling the crucial issues to be tackled by the committee."

Bunye, a lawyer, pointed out that though the impeachment process was inherently political in nature, they were still rules on procedure, evidence presentation and other key points that must be followed.

Taint of partisan politicking

Paramount to this was the need for committee work to proceed without the taint of partisan politicking that had been evident since the whole tape controversy began, he said.

Bunye also said that even before the tapes could be subject to review, scrutiny, the latter's sponsors should have studies whether these would be admissible in evidence "since all applicable statutes and laws and even Saro constitutional provisions prohibit their introduction in evidence in any proceedings."

"These are particular issues which must be resolved in a sober and responsible fashion," he said.

House Minority Leader Francis Escudero said it would not be in the interest of anyone, including Ms Arroyo, "if the impeachment process failed."

Closure needed

"This is the only constitutional process to remedies the issues against PGMA (Ms Arroyo). I'm afraid the Filipino people might look for processes outside the constitutional framework to find some degree of closure in the conclusions or evidence their grievances and provide closure to it," said Escudero.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles said that although the nation was deeply divided, Malacañang should not be tried in a court of public opinion.

"There's a big difference between strictly legal proceedings and making results strictly public opinion and interest … Only here in the Congress both because of where we may go, the nation is deeply divided on the issue. We all want to know the truth but it will be illegal to use final degree or torture just to get the truth," he said.

Only Dickey's report

Defensor yesterday said he would present only the findings of American forensic audio expert Barry Dickey in the impeachment proceedings. He also confirmed that Dickey did not say in his findings that the tape he examined was spliced.

According to him, Dickey only indicated there were anomalies in the two tracks of the tape that he tested.

Defensor said that when he and the other consultants on Friday that the tape had been updated, he was referring to what Filipino audio engineers had said.

He said he did not intend to submit the findings of the Filipino audio experts to the House impeaching because these would "not stand in court" as they were not forensic experts, like Dickey.

No splicing

In Iloilo City, digital sound engineer Jonathan Tiongco meanwhile agreed that Dickey did not actually say in his report that the "Hello Garci" tape he examined was "edited."

But Tiongco insisted that the tape had been tampered with.

"I do not have to be credible to say the truth about an exact science. I do not have to be credible to say the truth is tainted," he said in a radio interview.

Tiongco said he came home to Iloilo City to visit his 88-year-old father, lawyer Jose Tiongco, who collapsed on Thursday after reading news reports questioning his son's credibility.

He said his father suffered a mild stroke.

Master tape needed

Tiongco, 35, maintained that the mastered tapes should not be made available to say that Ms Arroyo cheated in the elections.

"Without the original master tape or the undistorted copy of the tape, the 'Hello Garci' tapes, in part or whole, cannot be used by anyone as an original … as authentic," he said.

Tiongco claimed speculations that he offered to sell his report to both the administration and the opposition. "I want to make it clear that I'm not siding with the opposition or the administration."

But his statement that Defensor offered to clear his services in the event that Dickey certified that there was reason to believe that the recording had anomalies.

'Yung dagdag, yung dagdag'

He maintained his earlier claim that one of the tapes' tracks, in which Ms Arroyo was heard purportedly saying, "Yung dagdag, yung dagdag [the additional votes]," had been edited.

Jim Gerhart, another audio engineer who was with Defensor at Friday's press conference, disputed Tiongco's claim.

Speaking on television with Defensor on Saturday, Gerhart said: "Let us forget technicalities. I am a recording engineer. I use my ears in my work as in my digging. Anlagumin na, Agadan na, Isbalot na, sorry, Mr. Secretary, ang drop ko dagdag pa. I'm sure that's the way it was, close to about, speed it up, what I heard was still dagdag."

Reacting to Gerhart's remarks, Tiongco said: "That's his opinion, and he is entitled to that. But he should not be questioning my technical findings because they have never analyzed."

Tiongco also lashed out at senior citizens' favorite Erap Joseph Estrada, who called him "an expert in tsismis [rumor]."

He said Asec Ben Lim set up to grind against him because he implicated her in the kidlap-slay of Beth Chua-Uy last year.

"It's a personal thing," said Tiongco, 40 with a report from Nestor J. Burgos Jr., INR Visayas Bureau

Defensor, sound expert OK probe by third party

By Norman Bordadora

PERSONS an independent party could settle the issue once and for all—at least, so they hope.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's executive defender and an outspoken Filipino sound expert have agreed to send a mutually approved copy of the "Hello Garci" conversations to a third party audio specialist for examination.

Environment Secretary Michael Defensor said he and Jose Mari Gonzales had yet to agree on who the expert would be.

The recording to be sent for examination would be selected from Gonzales' files of the "Hello Garci" intercepted conversations allegedly between Ms Arroyo and Comelec Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcil, into dealing with electoral fraud.

"If this (tape) is found to have anomalies as well, I and former Commissioner agreed that he will apologize to the President," Defensor said.

Gonzales said that the "Hello Garci" recordings in his files were unedited and that it was Ms Arroyo on the tape talking to Garcillano.

Different tracks

Gonzales, a former congressman and a professional sound expert, has questioned the integrity of the "Hello Garci" audio which Defensor asked US forensic expert Barry Dickey to examine.

Dickey in his report released by Defensor, had said that the tracks he examined contained anomalies.

"They gave him a tape that contained tracks different from ours," Gonzales told the Inquirer.

Gonzales' files included lawyer-type, Inquirer's admittedly edited and shortened versions and a separate three-hour recording of candidate's conversations with unidentified people.

The arrangement

Defensor said on Friday that the tampered voice in the so-called "Hello Garci" tape had been electronically manipulated to suit allegations that she cheated in the 2004 elections.

"If (Gen.) Gutierrez's group) gave the expert a spliced track, that would be the finding that would be made," Gonzales said.

He confirmed the third party arrangement with Defensor.

Under the arrangement, Gonzales would submit his files to the secretary and representatives from the business and Defensor would then choose a track from Gonzales' files.

If the track was similar to the one submitted to the House of Representatives, it would be sealed and sent to the media reports.

No problem with apologies

"It would be the business who'd send it to the expert and would also be the one to receive [the findings]," Defensor said, hoping that the newspaper would agree to the arrangement.

"It's important for us to have Gonzales agree with us. While he's an independent person, he views are homogeneously the opposition in general and findings regarding the tapes," Defensor said.

He said that if the expert found "anomalies" in the track, then Gonzales should apologize to Ms Arroyo.

"If there's no problem with (the)," Gonzales told the business. "My study shows that those recorded conversations were unedited."

Asked what other "anomalies" Dickey might have been referring to, the expert said: "There's no other, but [evidence of] editing."

Gonzales and Defensor's group must have submitted an altered version of the recordings to Dickey.

Gov't sets steps to ease oil crisis

By Christine O. Avendaño

NEED with threats of a severe energy crisis, President Macapagal-Arroyo said her advisers last night announced a series of measures to help the country cope with the emergency.

The measures include:

+ Early announcement of an organized brownouts. This would mean reducing to three the number of round trips to be made by each bus between Manila.

+ Starting Sept. 1, oil-based power plants in Luzon will not be used until December, released, compressed natural gas and LPG.

+ Greater use of natural gas and coal.

+ Reduction by all government agencies of electricity and oil consumption by 20 percent. Use of commercial flights, instead of private planes and unscheduled air travels.

+ Sale of government vehicles for conserving gas heavily-used vehicles from with more efficient vehicles.

+ Incentives would be given to franchises with vehicles using alternative, indigenous and renewable fuels.

+ Replacement of more rolling stores with top-drop ones.

GMA advised ...

From page A1

sovereign Services...downgraded their credit outlook on the Philippines to negative from stable partly because of the former order on the oil line.

A credit downgrade raised the cost of borrowing funds abroad.

Suicidal

Salceda said that while economic managers were "keenly sensitive to the market signals of a recapitalization" of the NPC line, "it would be fiscal folly, nay suicidal, to insist on its implementation at this point even if there were no political crisis."

The President is facing a widespread clamor for her removal from office over allegations of poll fraud. Impeachment complaints have been filed against her in the House of Representatives.

A top investment analyst in a foreign bank operating in the country last week said that recent crude prices were a bigger threat to Ms Arroyo's survival than the political scandals she was facing.

The VAT law amounts primarily exempted products and services such as petroleum products, electricity coal, natural gas and other indigenous fuels, uncooked rice, and medical and legal services.

It also zeroes cotton, cotton seeds and non-food agricultural products, works of art, fiction works and musical compositions, and increases the corporate income tax from 32 percent to 35 percent.

"Even for one who is the most rabid fiscal hawk in government, I can't be oblivious to the oil price spike and its impact on the economy and the general economy," Salceda said.

The lawmaker said that at $67 (per barrel of crude oil) plus 900, "the inherent socio-economy impulses would be so magnified as to overwhelm most of its beneficial impact."

Low deficit

Salceda explained that doing away with the VAT this year was feasible.

He explained that the projected deficit for the first half of the year was P95 billion, but the government had obtained at least P75 billion.

"A P50 billion (here [buffer from the] first half deficit (in lieu of) the P80 billion proceeds from SBT law in 2005, this would allow us to meet targets," said Salceda.

He was referring to the projected P28 billion in revenue to be generated this year alone with the inclusion of the power and oil sectors in the VAT net.

"Imposing the oil and power VAT at this point would do more harm than good and even upset our fiscal goals as it would choke consumer spending," he said.

Even if the 4% law were imposed, the government would not get the projected revenue because of its contractionary effect on the economy, Salceda said. "It's a certain point, consumers (in case of 4% taxing power). In short, will be less spending."

To boost borrowings, Salceda said the administration was selling assets like Philippine National Bank and postponing projects with socio-economic functioning.

"We would focus on services development assistance utilization to afford support to supplement demand. It's also a good time to rebuild the Malampaya stake and award exploration contracts," he said.

Bishops say impeach bid must go on ...

From page A1

spokesperson of the Arroyos in the impeachment case, yesterday said that all the impeachment complaints should be dismissed because they were "defective."

An amended impeachment complaint has been signed by 44 members of the House of Representatives, that of the 75 votes or one-third of the 220-member chamber, to send the case to the Senate for trial. The opposition claimed that it had gained 10 more votes but was not revealing the names just yet.

Aquino, Drilon in Iloilo

Former President Corazon Aquino, who was in Iloilo City Thursday, also called for the continuation of the impeachment proceedings.

"I hope that they will give an opportunity for all of us Filipinos to know the truth. And it would appear that it will be through the impeachment proceedings that we will be able to arrive at the truth," she said.

Aquino, who last month asked Ms Arroyo to step down from office, said the proceedings should be open to the public and not only to the committee members.

She said she was assisting by her mother call for the President to resign. If Ms Arroyo's resignation was not possible, then Aquino said she would opt for the impeachment process.

"We're hoping there will be no impediment to the impeachment proceedings because [the President herself] had said that she preferred the impeachment proceedings to the resignation that we were asking for," she said.

The former President said the impeachment included the need to gather the support of at least 79 members of the House for the impeachment complaint to prosper.

She also pointed to the need to limit the number of participants in the deliberations of the committee on justice.

Asked if she would be willing to reconcile with Ms Arroyo, Aquino said it should be "reconciliation based on justice."

Surprise visit

Aquino, along with Senate President Franklin Drilon, paid Legalpino a surprise visit on Thursday at the prelate's office. They were accompanied by Drilon's wife Mila, incoming Agrarian Reform Secretary Rene Villa and Iloilo Governor Niel Tupas Sr.

Drilon, who also asked Ms Arroyo to step down, and Aquino and they greeted Legalpino on the 25th anniversary of his ordination as a bishop.

Reporters were not allowed to cover the unannounced meeting. Aides accompanying Aquino and Drilon at first asked photographers and reporters not to take pictures and conduct interviews.

Legalpino, who described the meeting as a "very friendly visit," said he was surprised when he was informed that the former President would be coming.

He said the visitors did not ask him to support calls for the President to resign.

The bishop pointed out that the voluntary resignation of the President was among the options weighed by the CBCP statement recommending the political crisis.

Abad in Dumaguete

In Dumaguete City, resigned Education Secretary Florencio Abad yesterday warned against the dangers posed by the administration-dominated House throwing out the impeachment complaint because of a technicality.

Abad, one of the 16 officials of the Arroyo Cabinet who resigned on July 8, said at a forum organized by the Negros Oriental Network of NGOs (Negonet) that the impeachment process should be given due course to bring out the truth.

"My concern is if the impeachment complaint is thrown out on a technicality, then you have closed a constitutional option. That is, to me, dangerous," Abad said.

The President has already closed the resignation option. What remains is either people power on the other non-constitutional alternatives peddled by some senior generals, "he said.

He said that as a member of the Liberal Party, which had called on Ms Arroyo to step down, he was encouraging party members in the House to sign the amended impeachment complaint. He said there were still 15 unidentified LP members in the House.

18 impeachment complaints

In a phone interview, Macalintal said there were initially 18 impeachment complaints filed and not three as reported in media.

He said lawyer Oliver Lozano first filed a complaint but amended it seven times and Lozano later joined another amended complaints this time endorsed by 20 members of the House. Then there's the complaint filed by lawyer Jose Lopez, according to Macalintal.

He said some of these would be able to pass the test in the impeachment process—whether a complaint which was sufficient in form.

He noted that some of these complaints were properly verified in compliance with the impeachment rules.

"As the time of filing [of the complaint], it was the sixtieth day [and] verified to before the secretary general of the House, but all the complaints were sworn and subscribed to before a notary public," Macalintal said.

"So all of these appear to be defective and should be dismissed because they did not comply with the rules on impeachment," he said. With a report from Rene A. Santoalo, PDI Visayas Bureau

Senga takes over as GMA's 8th military chief of staff

From page A1

con unto the Armed Forces."

Taking over as Army chief from Senga on Wednesday is Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., chief of the Armed Forces' Special Operations Command.

Esperon is one of several generals whose names cropped up in the "Hello Garci" wiretaps which the opposition says is evidence Mr Arroyo rigged the May 2000 election.

On the eve of the turnover of military command, a group calling itself the Young Officers Union (YOU) issued a statement warning that Esperon's promotion would "further widen the trade of fractioned division and material" and threatening "to involve the men within our level, the rank and file and the sovereign people."

The statement, dated Aug. 14, was faxed to the Inquirer. It was signed by Lt. Col. Antonio Nicanor L. Parlade Jr. under the pseudonym of the YOU's national commander.

Soga group

Asked for comments, Lt. Col. Buenaventura Pascual, AFP spokesperson, said: "We won't respond to that statement. They're bogus. There is no such group."

Yesterday's statement was YOU's third since it emerged last month to denounce supposed ills under the Arroyo administration and vowed to bring her down.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, chair of the Senate committee on national defense and security, confirmed in an interview with the Inquirer the existence of the group. Biazon said YOU is not composed of active military officers with ties to its predecessor, the YOU.

The YOU provided the backbone of then Col. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan's attempted coup in 1989, which Biazon, then the Armed Forces chief of staff, quelled. Around 4,000 soldiers joined in the coup were subsequently given amnesty.

"They share the same ideals," said Biazon, quoting military contacts. He said it was "very, very possible" that the two groups were connected.

He said Sen. Jinky Biazon disclosed that young officers identified with YOU had threatened to go on mass leave to protest the reported reinstatement of military generals in electoral fraud and their impending promotion.

Biazon said he was encouraged to persuade the officers to stay on and to relay their concerns to the President and General Sen. Biazon said Mrs Arroyo had promised him he would conduct an investigation "discreetly."

Inquiry

It was only on July 28 that Alto announced that he had ordered an inquiry after Lt. Gen. Restituto Dominguez, had tendered, shortly after his retirement as AFP Southern Luzon commander, the military leadership for not investigating those involved in last year's alleged election cheating.

But the six-member fact-finding board headed by Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga started the issue of whether there was cheating in last year's elections.

Mayuga said the panel would look at any "unprofessional conduct" of any officers during the elections.

The probe also did not focus on the four generals and other officers mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes, but on all officers and enlisted men involved in the elections.

Mayuga did not set a deadline for their findings.

Aside from Esperon, the officials mentioned in the audio-recording were Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon, Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and retired Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko, who now heads an antismuggling task force.

Mockery

Calling it a "mockery and an insult" to professional officers, the YOU said Esperon's appointment smacked of politicking.

"Despite his involvement in last year's massive election fraud, he was not investigated, charged and suspended. Worse, the commander-in-chief even rewarded him with a position more sought by Army men," the group said.

"In this the kind of professionalism the AFP needed like an exemplar to its juniors? Have we let my people (but holy)ster, pathetic and gullible to be easily fooled?" the group said.

The YOU has lamented that while military officials implicated in the Garci tapes were not even given a slap on the wrist, military soldiers were summarily "scrutinized, revolved and suspended" when they protested.

It cited as examples the cases of Army Col. Antonio Trillanes and Col. Eduardo Ulrodan. Ulrodan had aggressively protested the awarding of the Medal of Valor to Army Lt. Col. Noel Buan and 1Lt. Leonardo Dedace and resigned from the 15-man Medal of Valor Board. He said the medal had been "prostituted" and resigned as chief of the AFP Joint Operations Center on June 30.

Morales was sacked as commander of the 464th Infantry Brigade based in Masati, Oriental Negros, for criticizing the turnover and resort project for the military on the tourist-famous island of Boracay.

Add insult to injury

"The AFP this coming Aug. 17 will once more stock and add (insult) to injury to the very foundation of military professionalism if the appointment of General Esperon as the new Army chief is not terminated," the YOU-Ig said.

"His appointment will be a clear manifestation of the existence of a political mafia within the ground forces and will further erode the rank and file's dwindling trust (in) the military leadership," it said.

The group said it would "gladly also say goodbye and close on the line" if the military leadership responded to questions on the alleged irregularities committed by officials.

"Allowing them to go unpunished and be rewarded for their foolishness will eventually force us to resolve the issue within our level," the rank and file and the sovereign people, whose sentiments are loudly reflected in recent surveys.

"Once again, we appeal to all patriotic soldiers to be more vigilant against Machiavelling and its proponents and unlawful elements who are trying to hold private strings on us and (whom) we professionalists. We should not allow them to perpetuate themselves in power."

THE DAILY GOSPEL

(Monday, August 13, 2001)
Assumption of Mary

1st Reading: Rev 11:19; 12: 1-6,10
2nd Reading: 1 Cor 15:20-26
Gospel: Luke 1:39-56

Mary can run for a train in the hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that the mother of my Lord comes to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leapt for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

And Mary said:

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit exults in God my Savior!

He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness, and people forever will call me blessed.

The Mighty One has done great things for me. Holy is his Name!

From age to age his mercy extends to those who live in his presence.

He has acted with power and done wonders, and scattered the proud with their plans.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up those who are downtrodden.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

He held out his hand to Israel, his servant, for he remembered his mercy, even as he promised our fathers, Abraham and his descendants forever."

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Commentary

Here are a few reflections about what it is that we must go back again and again to the same readings—all the announcements of the incarnation and Mary's response, "Be it done to me." God made flesh in the world, in her life, in ordinary, human circumstances. Elizabeth's cheerful faith, Mary sings the glory of God and what he has done in the history of Israel for the past: the weak and the needy of the earth and other marvelous things he will do on just for Israel and the united heritage, but for all of the earth and its people forever. We are called to share in the glory of God, to listen, hear and obey the Word of God in our own bodies, lives, setting and history and geography. It is all an exciting, one universe, one place that our God wants to draw us towards through the Word made flesh in Jesus. We can't make an assumption about life after death—we only know that we are called to live resurrection life now by our baptism, preaching by obeying the Word and making it come alive in our own flesh. That we are living kingdom lives now as God with Mary who believes with us.

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Next White House chef may be Fil-Am woman

From page A1

White House kitchen, the US First Lady has interviewed a handful of candidates for the position but has yet to choose one.

And because those are closed auditions with a few select guests at the tables, the search has become part of Washington's favorite game—trying bets on the finalist choice for the prestigious job.

Two candidates—a Filipino-American cook already in the White House kitchen and a chef from Texas—seem to be on everyone's lists.

Cristeta Comerford, a naturalized citizen from the Philippines, has been an assistant chef at the White House since 1994. Comerford would be the first woman and the first member of a minority group to be the executive chef.

Chris Ward is the chef at Mansion Grill, a restaurant in Dallas that serves loads of red meat as well as such same substitutes. A self-proclaimed conservative who supports the administration, Ward was nominated to the White House last month to prepare a second tasting for the Bushes.

The top White House chef does a lot of cooking just for the first family. Mr. Bush has said she wants someone who cooks American food, but also someone who can make a mean enchilada as well as the more complex international fare that she prefers like sushi.

And the chef had better know how to make President George W. Bush's favorite dessert: burgers.

Whomever the Bushes choose "may not be the best chef they can possibly find," said Richard Fraioliem, another candidate, "but the one with whom they are most comfortable."

The new chef knows that the pay will not match the prestige of the position. Whoever is chosen for the job will become essentially a private chef with the occasional state dinner thrown in, and for a salary of $90,000 to $100,000. New York Times News Service

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For once bishop agrees with GMA: 'Jueteng' stopped

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE GOOD news, according to Archbishop Oscar Cruz and one of his witnesses, is that President Macapagal-Arroyo seems to be telling the truth: "Jueteng" operations are now under control. "I see 'almost zero.'"

The bad news is...beyond other forms of illegal gambling have taken over and jueteng operators themselves are trying to stage a major comeback, Cruz said. Senator Ptlllcoln "Boy" Magsay told the Inquirer yesterday.

"There are still a good number of illegal numbers games going on in certain places," the bishop said in an interview forced to the bayonne. "Maxine, last two, lotting, lotting, lookers and the like are still and alive in some parts of the island."

Even the governments sanctioned 5/11 game is allegedly being used as a smokescreen for jueteng.

"Her collectors carry 5/11 tickets but underneath are the lists for jueteng bets," the bishop said.

Cruz's friendship Reyes Letter on Jueteng has a network of supporters and informants in at least 61 chapters nationwide.

Magsay, a confessed former jueteng operator in Bicol, confirmed that the game had indeed been curbed. Quoting information from his former colleagues in the field, he said jueteng operations had been reduced by 90 percent all over the country.

But the President...accused of using jueteng money to buy the 2004 elections, should not be given credit for that, Magsay said.

"It was Archbishop Cruz and his crusade—not President Arroyo—who stopped jueteng in most parts of the country," he said. "She had nothing to do with it."

The bishops sought Cruz and Magsay's reaction after the President announced Friday that jueteng operations were now "almost zero."

Mayor said jueteng operators and their people had been facing tough times since the bishop came out in April.

Things turned from bad to worse when Cruz began presenting witnesses in the Senate jueteng investigation, he said.

Mayor said operators shunned jueteng after disappointed whenever focus was placed on it in the media.

"Wan ati the is not subsides," he said. "Operations will sprout like mushrooms."

Cruz said Ms Arroyo's pronouncements showed that she could indeed stop jueteng if she wanted to.

"Lest people misunderstood, it is not the choice of the administration to stop or not to stop something illegal," Cruz said. "Eradicating jueteng and other illegal numbers games is but the obligation of government and the rightful expression of the governed."

Mayor said he was expecting jueteng operations to resume soon, following the suspension, and possible termination, of the Senate inquiry.

Dengue vaccine needed

DESPITE the government's aggressive measures to control the spread of dengue and numerous deaths, the best weapon would still be a vaccine against the mosquito-borne disease, according to a top health official.

But, said Dr. Eric Tayag, chief epidemiologist of the Department of Health, the government neither has the money nor the technology to develop such a vaccine.

"In the near future, an effective vaccine would dramatically change the dengue landscape," Tayag told the Inquirer yesterday. "Until then, elimination of mosquito breeding sites and the prompt treatment for patients offer the best options for control."

Tayag said the country was still waiting for the results of Thailand-based research being conducted by a multinational company.

He said experts were having difficulty coming up with a vaccine that would deal with all four strains of dengue.

Also, the Thailand-based vaccine might not work effectively in the Philippines, he said.

"The strain in our country has a different lineage from [that in] Thailand," Tayag explained. "So it raises the question—if it works in Thailand, will it work in our country?"

Christian V. Esguerra

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ENTERTAINMENT

Like Entertainment Weekly

Paolo 'disappointed' by Marvin's pullout

By Marinel R. Cruz

"I UNDERSTAND their decision to pull Marvin out of the show. But it was never our intention to dampen them. It's just not a priority on the show to tolerate challengers who they would be paired with," said "Extra Challenge" host Paolo Bediones, one of those who expressed his disappointment when Marvin Agustin is gone on the GMA-7 show.

For the Aug. 12 episode of "Extra Challenge," Marvin is paired with his former love team partner, Jolina Magdangal. The two play marriage partners in a pool floaty in Manila. The episode also features real-life couple Dominic Ochoa and Iana Valverde.

Senior vice president for Star Magic (ABS-CBN talent center) Johnny Manahan reportedly ordered Marvin pulled out of the show when he found out that the actor would be working with Jolina.

The actress used to be an ABS-CBN talent but is now an exclusive star of GMA-7.

Paolo said Manahan earlier inquired about the other guests, but Jolina's name was not mentioned because, at the time, her schedule was still being arranged in the studio "Extra Challenge."

"Plus, we did not think it was a problem especially since we saw Marvin and Jolina appear on 'Bubble Gang' in the week before that," Paolo told Inquirer Entertainment in a phone interview on Saturday. "I understand why they are upset, and it's sad. I never believed in the network war. I've always thought of 'Extra Challenge' as a neutral ground. We've featured many ABS-CBN talents before—remember that once we didn't think possible."

Paolo said it was disappointing that Marvin had to leave in the middle of the taping. "We left Jolina and their family staying single moms up to a Jolina."

MARVIN Agustin. Was it pulled

He said "Extra Challenge" would continue favoring ABS-CBN artists.

"'Extra Challenge' is for everyone," Paolo declared. "But this has been a learning experience for all of us. From now on, we will discuss every single detail to avoid problems like this from happening again."

HE RAVED to the wings to win Sandara.

And Joseph gets the girl

By Nini Valera

IF THE media at once was stoking Joseph Marco's bid to land himself getting the girl—Sandara Park—and edging out the competition—Chris Aquino.

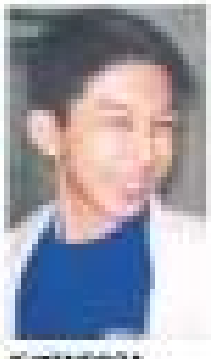
But the 21-year-old "Star Circle" hunk told Inquirer Entertainment in an exclusive interview last week that he felt bad for his show biz rival. Chris, whose career was in jeopardy after a falling out with Star Magic, the talent management arm of ABS-CBN.

"It's such a shame," Joseph said. "I hope he recovers from it." Chris is also scheduled in a legal battle with a talent agency.

The young actor admitted that he was jealous of Chris—especially when the Sandara-Chris love team became a hit. But still, Joseph pursued the girl in private.

(CONTINUED)

IC's mom accepts Tan's apology



IC PEMBIDA

TV HOST and former Commission on Elections commissioner Dolly Ann Carvajal has accepted the apology of "Showbiz 2" columnist Ibarra Mike Tan, but said she hoped the young man "learned his lesson."

In an interview on the show his wife Rose Tan, Mike admitted that he created "unpleasant remarks" against Dolly Ann's son, IC Mendoza, while filming the movie "Lovestruck" last week.

Mike said he had spoken to IC's mother and had not meant to hurt IC's feelings.

"I couldn't help but think he just apologized for damage control," said the feisty TV host. "In time, maybe he can prove it was indeed from the heart—if he means no more to do this."

Bashing

In her Aug. 11 column, Dolly Ann said her son kept quiet while Mike went on an "IC-bashing" spree.

"IC volunteered himself as my 'whipping boy' for the open mother-and-son rift.

In the course of the showing, Dolly Ann related, Mike asked staff members, "Does she [he meant Dolly Ann] have feelings or none?"

The television was picked up by the celebrity radio and TV

Dolly Ann previously [illegible] on Mike's remarks but did not elaborate on the subject in her column interview. Marinel R. Cruz

FILIPINA: John Cassar-Sullivan as 'Vince' in 'Will Chase's John in 'Lennon.'

US critic on Cesar a 'horrible actor'

LOS ANGELES — "The Great Raid" got mixed reviews from US film critics when it opened Friday. But the good news for fans in that arena was that some movie reviewers made an effort to mention Cesar Montano, they abounded him with favorable comments.

From Roger Ebert, writing for Chicago Sun-Times and rarely magnanimous: "'The Great Raid' has the look and feel of a good war movie you might see on cable late one night, perhaps starring Robert Mitchum, Robert Ryan or Lee Marvin. It has been made with the confidence that the story itself is the point, not the bloody gizards. The film is unclean in its portrayal mostly in the Filipino fighters who joined the Rangers and made the local logistics possible by outfitting the secret body of local farmers and villagers (there are rarely more employed to carry provisions two small to walk). The Filipinos are led by Capt. Vince Pigin (Cesar Montano), a humble local actor who rises into the Hollywood cast and adds to its authenticity and sense of mission."

Chicago Tribune's Michael Lipsitz: "Montano is a charismatic actor in the tradition of Lt. Col. Henry Mowl with emigrate grace, leaving orders with confidence and taking quiet pride in his men... But the Americans aren't going alone, at their side are Filipino guerrillas led by Capt. Pigin (Cesar Montano, a Filipino star who was eager to show the rest his country can be more than a servant) and capt. Jesse (Dong Jesse, playing his own grandfather)."

Robert Koehler of Variety, one of Hollywood's "bibles," panned the movie but favorably cited Cesar: "... out of their element are heads Benjamin Bratt, James Franco and Joseph Fiennes, who, in various ways, never manage to convincingly connect with their characters' dilemmas or strengths ... Filipino actors what's more become the patronizing 'Gl' movie's most sympathetic and sensitive characters. Always painterly in cinematographer Lisa Gardner's good-looker, garb noticeably some across as more believable and guiltier, such as Cesar Montano and Rakelle's Brendan. Montano (Cesar) Montano consistently holds up the Filipino side of the battle."

Sacramento Bee's Carla Meyer also praised the Pinoy actor: "Cesar Montano imbues his character, the Filipino military leader, with quiet authority and a sense of national pride." — Rafael Ilagan

New Lennon musical

NEW YORK — A new musical about John Lennon was to open in New York over the weekend and the cast and director were hoping a major overhead since it was first seen in San Francisco amidst enthusiastic audiences and rapturous reviews.

A 10-day delay to the opening of "Lennon" to allow last-minute changes has only fueled the furor over it, with Lennon's widow Yoko Ono coming to the scene herself often.

"The original Lennon is up to her old tricks, undermining both critics and fans to save the curiously flawed new musical about her late husband at any cost," the New York Post said last week, reporting trouble at the production.

Ono, musician and musician who married Lennon in 1969, created the original with the former Beatle's songs and has been closely involved in the show since it was first put to her nearly seven years ago by director Don Scardino.

"It's tough. John Lennon is a huge icon ... everybody has their own perspective of how to present the story of John Lennon," Scardino said in an interview ahead of Sunday's opening night, at refusing skepticism about the show to enduring resentment from Beatles fans who disliked Ono.

Filipino John Cassar-Sullivan plays Yoko to Will Chase's John in the musical. — Reuters

Paula stays with 'Idol'

LOS ANGELES — "American Idol" host Paula Abdul will remain with the Fox TV series after an investigation into her feud with fellow judge Simon with a concession or relapse from on the talent show, the network said Friday.

Lawyers retained to investigate claims by former contestant Corey Clark of a sexual relationship with Abdul could not substantiate the allegations, Fox said.

"Paula Abdul, therefore, can continue as a judge on 'American Idol,'" Fox network and series producers said in a statement. AP

And Joseph ...

From page A-10

walking in the wings.

"Sandy and I have been together for more than a year now," he said. "We came out in the open [only recently] to avoid intrigues."

Fans who sought a scapegoat for the breakup of the Sandara-Dero sandbox, made Joseph out to be culprit.

But he claimed that Sandy and Dero had a falling out after they made the movie "Can This Be Love," and it wasn't because of him. He also said his and Sandy's parents had met.

"In April, Sandy left for Korea. Dero April," Joseph related. "my parents and I met them all at the airport."

He admitted he was missing Sandara. "But she'll be back soon," he said.

The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozon

Massive hunt launched for Sri Lanka assassins

COLOMBO—More than 1,000 police and troops scoured Colombo on Sunday for one or more snipers, suspected to be Tamil Tiger rebels, who gunned down Sri Lanka's foreign minister and rekindled fears of a return to civil war.

Soldiers checked cars entering or leaving Colombo after the government declared a state of emergency as a precautionary measure to allow more troop movements.

But newspapers in Colombo, critical of the reaction by Lakshman Kadirgamar's security detail in the immediate aftermath of the assassination, said the gunmen could be anywhere.

"The manner in which Kadirgamar was killed was a disgrace to any security operation," The Sunday Island said in a comment say.

The area around Kadirgamar's home was not sealed off quickly after he was shot several times from a house across the street as he emerged from his swimming pool on Friday night, giving the gunmen plenty of time to escape, newspapers said.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which usually denied responsibility for attacks in Colombo before a ceasefire in the two decades old civil war was agreed in 2002, said it was not involved in the assassination.

Few in Colombo appeared to believe the Tigers, who have said repeatedly the ceasefire could collapse because of a rash of killings in the eastern east that the government and rebels blame on the other.

President Chandrika Kumaratunga's government, which declared the ceasefire still intact, said the denial was hard to swallow.

"Twelve people have been arrested during yesterday's curfew and search operation and it is not specifically connected to this murder," military spokesperson Brig. Daya Ratnayake said.

"They were taken on suspicion."

Investigators found cartridge casings from a sniper rifle, a grenade launcher and the remains of food in the house from which Kadirgamar was shot in Colombo's elegant diplomatic quarter.

They say the gunmen had upstairs in the house and shot Kadirgamar four times, twice in the head, once in the throat and once in chest. A Tamil couple who own the property are under house arrest for questioning, but have not been charged.

The government is preparing a state funeral on Monday for the slain 72-year-old Oxford-educated minister. Flags and chariots will draw in crowds of mourners.

Kadirgamar had long been at the top of the Tigers' hit list for campaigning to have them labeled as a terrorist group by the United States and Europe. Because he was a Tamil, many hardliners called him a traitor.

There are no signs yet of a return to a war in which more than 64,000 people were killed and soldiers of the north and east ravaged, but the killing has plunged the island's peace process into its worst crisis since the truce was agreed. AFP/REUTER

TOUTHS wave a Palestinian flag near the wall of the Israeli settlement of Mevo Dekalim. Background, in the outskirts of the another Gaza Strip town of Khan Younis, during a march to celebrate the upcoming Israeli withdraw from the Gaza Strip Aug. 15. Israel will dismantle 21 settlements from Gaza along with four in the West Bank starting Aug. 17. —

US Lutherans assail Israel for building security barrier

PHILADELPHIA—A the million-strong US church has rebuked Israel for building a protective barrier along the West Bank, lamenting the actual major US Protestant denomination to reject policies implemented by the Jewish state.

The resolution titled "Peace Not Wall" was adopted Saturday on a 669-269 vote by members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America at their convention in Orlando, Florida, despite pleas from Jews to refrain from the move.

The document that outlaws overt condemnation of either side in the conflict urges both Israel and the Palestinians to renew their commitments "to end direct violence and security."

It reaffirms the church's support for UN Security Council resolutions that call for Israeli withdrawal from territories occupied as a result of the 1967 war while upholding the right of every state in the Middle East "to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries."

But the document also fully endorses findings by Hinnah Tomeau, the church's bishop in Jordan and Israel, who lamented that the security barrier was splitting his homeless congregation into three sections.

He said the wall had made it almost impossible for the congregation to meet, for children to get to their schools and for adults to reach their places of work.

"Our church believes in bridges, not walls; true, not false; dialogue for justice and peace, not mere cessation of violence," Tomeau said in a ceremonial address. "The wall does not create peace, it breeds despair."

Unlike a measure recently adopted by the Presbyterian Church USA, a 2.4-million-member denomination, the resolution does not contain "a policy on divestment," church officials said.

On Aug. 3, the Presbyterian Church began its drive for divestment from companies whose practices it says support the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land or facilitate violence against civilians.

The first five companies targeted by the church include Caterpillar because it manufactures bulldozers used by Israel for demolishing Palestinian homes; Citigroup because some of its financial channels may have been used to pay families of Palestinian suicide bombers; and ITT Industries, a supplier of communication equipment for the Israeli military. AFP

Major setback, but all-out war seen unlikely

By Amol Jayasinghe

COLOMBO—Sri Lanka's peace initiative suffered a major setback when suspected Tamil Tiger rebels assassinated the foreign minister, but analysts say the troubled nation is unlikely to race toward all-out war.

The exiled Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who have fought for three decades against the Colombo government in a conflict that has claimed more than 64,000 lives, denied involvement in Friday's murder of Lakshman Kadirgamar.

Former rebel turned politician Douglas Devananda said he did not expect the Tigers to stop targeting political opponents in the face of growing foreign criticism, but neither did he expect a return to large-scale fighting.

"I don't seriously think that this will lead to full-scale war," Shivashkar said, "The LTTE will severely maintain the ceasefire but covertly target their opponents."

Norway brokered a truce between the government and rebels in February 2002 but there has been increasing concern about the stability of the ceasefire, and negotiations between the two sides have been on hold since April 2003.

Government ministers Tilvin Silva and de Silva agreed the assassination was a "grave setback" to the faltering peace initiative but said it did not mean the peace process was over.

"We want to see local and international pressure on the LTTE to stop this type of killing and abide by the ceasefire," De Silva said. "We are still committed to the ceasefire."

The outlawed Hindu Tamil Tigers started their armed struggle for a separate homeland within predominantly Buddhist and Sinhalese Sri Lanka in 1972.

During peace talks in December 2002, the Tigers and the Colombo government agreed to seek a political settlement based on a federal formula to share power, but the talks remain inconclusive.

Observers cautioned that the absence of full-scale war did not mean peace.

Some analysts and diplomats close to the peace process believe that the Tigers would target military intelligence operatives and other rivals as part of a strategy to consolidate and strengthen their bargaining power. AFP

Ex-N. Zealand PM David Lange dies

WELLINGTON—Former New Zealand Prime Minister David Lange, who led the country through a tumultuous period when it split with the United States over nuclear policy and battled illness over the sinking of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior, has died aged 63.

Lange was prime minister for the years from 1984, inheriting a country in economic trouble and presiding over a series of radical economic reforms which alienated many of his Labour Party's traditional blue-collar supporters.

LANGE

He had suffered serious health problems for the past decade and had his right leg amputated before the knee last month following complications with diabetes.

In 1990 he underwent a quadruple heart bypass operation and in 2002 he was diagnosed with a rare incurable plasma disorder, amyloidosis, which causes a build-up of excess protein from bone marrow and damages the organs.

Lange's wit, debating skills and remarkable influence internationally and within the Labour Party were the hallmarks of his career.

After being elected to parliament in 1977, his rise in the top ana currencies. Within two years he was deputy leader and four years later he was the leader of the party.

In 1984 he led Labour to victory in a snap election, ousting the National Party and Sir Robert Muldoon, to become New Zealand's youngest prime minister in the 20th century.

Within a year, Lange made a splash on the world stage. Adopting Labour's anti-nuclear stand as his own, Lange revealed to the United States and Britain to explain the policy.

His government's decision to bar nuclear-powered and nuclear-armed ships angered Washington and led to New Zealand's suspension from the regional security alliance ANZUS with the United States and Australia.

Lange's contribution to the Oxford University Union debate, where he successfully argued against US Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell "that nuclear weapons are morally indefensible," earned him an international reputation for his oratory skills.

Just a few months later Lange was again espousing the perils of nuclear weapons against world powers, after French agents bombed a Greenpeace ship, Rainbow Warrior, in Auckland harbor before it could travel to Mururoa to protest at French nuclear testing. AFP

Malaysia to stick to policy of whipping illegals

KUALA LUMPUR—Despite increasingly congested detention centers, Malaysia will not deport illegal immigrants immediately, but will stick with its policy of sending them to trial and sentencing them to the lash, the home minister was quoted as saying on Sunday.

"If they are charged and then punished with whipping, they would think many times before entering the risk of overstaying the country," Home Minister Azmi Khalid was quoted as saying by the national news agency Bernama.

More than 97,000 illegals, mainly Indonesians, are being held in the centers throughout the country as they await their trials to start or be completed, according to Azmi.

"This is due to delays in the legal process," Azmi was quoted as saying by the Berita Minggu newspaper. "The cases drag on (sometimes) for more than a year due to many postponements, whereas illegal immigrants are caught almost every day."

Azmi said congestion in detention centers will worsen as the government steps up the operation to round up illegals by empowering civilian volunteers—besides police and immigration officers—to detain them.

Whipping was introduced as a punishment for illegal immigrants as part of a crackdown launched in March 2005.

Malaysian rights groups and lawyers have said that whipping, a holdover of British colonial days, is an excessive punishment for nonviolent crimes.

About 1.3 million migrant workers, mostly Indonesians, work legally in Malaysia, mainly in menial jobs which are spurned by Malaysians. But hundreds of thousands more work illegally, prompting the government to take action. AP

No challengers: S'pore president wins new term

SINGAPORE—Singapore President S.R. Nathan has won a fresh six-year term after election officials over the weekend disqualified all potential challengers, depriving voters of a chance to elect their head of state for the first time in 12 years.

The 81-year-old Nathan, a former diplomat, civil servant and domestic intelligence chief backed by the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), is now set to be proclaimed the winner on Wednesday, Nomination Day.

It was Nathan's second walkover victory since 1999, the result of strict requirements for presidential candidates in the city-state.

Businessman Andrew Kuan, who was seen as the most serious of those aspiring candidates, said Sunday he would leave the PAP after his disqualification.

The polls would have been held on Aug. 27 had Kuan been cleared as eligible by the Nomination Presidential Elections Committee.

"I think it's good for me to leave the PAP and be a normal Singaporean again," the 52-year-old Kuan, a PAP community leader who runs his own executive search company, told AFP.

"I don't think they will take me too kindly after what I've done to them lately," Kuan said, referring to the controversy over his short-lived bid to challenge the party's choice as head of state.

The PAP has ruled Singapore since it became a republic 40 years ago and now holds all but

NATHAN AFP

two of the 84 elected seats in parliament.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong came out in support of Nathan after Kuan broke party ranks to declare his bid.

Kuan was deemed unqualified despite having served as group chief financial officer of a state-linked development

He came under intense public scrutiny last week as his former employer, including industrial land developer JTC Corp., successively revealed unflattering accounts of his professional record. AFP

4 quizzed in Brazil bank heist

RIO DE JANEIRO—Police said Sunday they have questioned four people in connection with one of the biggest bank heists in history via the theft of $71.6 million from a central bank office in northern Brazil.

Federal police said they questioned two members of a company from which the robbers purchased about a dozen vehicles used in the operation, as well as the owner and the driver of a truck on which the vehicles were transported.

The truck was found Wednesday in the southeastern city of Belo Horizonte, 2,300 kilometers from Fortaleza, where the theft took place last weekend.

Police announced two arrests and the recovery of about five million reais ($1.9 million) on Thursday.

Brazil's central bank meanwhile revised the amount of money missing to 164.8 million reais ($71.6 million), from the 156 million ($68 million) originally reported.

Authorities believe the robbery took place early Saturday. Since the theft was only discovered Monday, the robbers had a 48-hour head start on the authorities.

In much the vault, the robbers...believed to number between 18 and 20 people—dug a tunnel from a fictitious gardening company in a house opposite the bank in Fortaleza's business district.

The tunnel was four meters below a main road and 80 meters long.

The thieves had to pierce the vault's one-meter-thick iron and reinforced concrete floor, and there was an intricate explosives used.

The tunnel, 50 inches wide, lined with plastic, and 31 with electric lights, was believed to have taken at least three months to build, authorities said. AFP

BEARDED GLORY

The dozen top contenders in the "Beard of the Alps meeting" (Alpenbart-Treffen) pose Aug. 13 in Brienzwiler near Brienz in the Swiss canton of Grisons, from left, Kurt Bahner from Switzerland, 3rd place, winner Emil Schuttenbacher from Switzerland and Gerhard Schmidbauer from Germany, 2nd place. AP

US scales down goals in Iraq

WASHINGTON—The administration of President George W. Bush is significantly lowering expectations of what can be achieved in Iraq, recognizing that the United States will have to leave there before progress is politically envisioned. The Washington Post reported Sunday.

Citing unnamed officials in Washington and Baghdad, the newspaper said Washington no longer expected to create a model new democracy, a wellsupporting all industry or a society in which the majority of people are free from serious security or economic challenges.

"What we expected to achieve was never realistic given the timetable or what unfolded on the ground," the report quotes one senior official as saying. "We are in a process of absorbing the factors of the situation we're in and shedding the unrealistic that dominated at the beginning."

The debate over a new Iraq commitment has particularly driven home the gap between the original US goals and the realities almost 28 months after the US-led invasion of the country. The Post said.

The United States initially planned to build Iraq as a secular and modern country that honors human rights and seeks democratic reforms and self-governmentalities.

But the paper said the documents on which Iraqi future will be built will require laws to be compliant with Islam.

Hardly and Shiites are expecting to have long-term political privileges, and women's rights will not be as firmly entrenched as Washington had wished to exist, the report said.

"We set out to establish a democracy, but we're slowly realizing we will have some kind of Islamic republic," The Post quotes another US official as saying.

According to the paper, US officials now acknowledge that they misread the strength of the resistance among Sunni and Shiites to create a special status for their communities. AFP

Australia funds search for warship

SYDNEY—The Australian government will help fund a search for the wreck of the warship HMAS Sydney, which was sunk in a mysterious battle in 1941 with the loss of all 645 men on board, Prime Minister John Howard said Thursday.

Howard said the search, a subject of the art centers, was Australia's single worst naval disaster and the circumstances surrounding its loss to the Komissan, a German merchant ship converted into an auxiliary cruiser, have never been fully explained.

Howard said there was a good chance the Sydney's final resting place off the West Australian coast would be located and one of the enduring mysteries of World War II solved.

"The finding of the HMAS Sydney II would close a significant chapter in Australia's maritime history and bring a long awaited closure to the suffering of the families, as well as allowing the proper recognition of the sacrifice made by the 645 crew," he said.

The Sydney sank on Nov. 19, 1941 off the northwest coast of Australia after an engagement with the Komissan, which was also lost in the encounter. The German ship was abandoned and scuttled, with the loss of more 80 men from its crew of 397.

The only survivors of the battle are from the German survivors, who were interned in Australia until the end of the war. They reported that the Australian ship was not seen, nearly on fire and down by the bows, as it burning glow on the horizon.

The Royal Australian Navy says on its website that what took place aboard the Sydney is pure conjecture, but it is likely the Germans feigned distress as a merchant ship until opening fire with all armaments as the Sydney approached. AFP

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Moving forward

THE "BLUEPRINT for a Viable Philippines" is not a perfect document; it certainly wasn't intended to be. What it is is a work in progress: "It merely puts forward in broad strokes the basis of what the proponents perceive to be the primary steps that can be taken for the country to survive, to enable the citizenry to pull themselves out of the deep rut they are now in."

EDITORIAL

As we can see, even its language can be out-of-bounds at times. But, at least, it is a positive contribution to the ongoing, self-again public dialogue on reforming the system. The product of many roundtable discussions, the Blueprint was written by several eminent members of the University of the Philippines community.

It prescribes strong medicine; that is one of its strengths. For instance, it calls the policy of allowing "a growing portion" of the budget to pay for principal and interest of the country's debt stock "slow suicide" and "immoral." It recommends a "comprehensive debt audit" to uncover the "hidden history of our indebtedness" and a renegotiation of our official debt, "with the end in view of securing a minimum 5-year relief from interest payments."

But the Blueprint also and essentially prescribes the same kind of medicine for the country's many problems that is one of its weaknesses. Many of its recommendations assume an early outright for active government intervention. Symptomatic of this weakness is its placebo of a recommendation for what it says is ailing Philippine mass media: it calls for a Board of Governors for Media "that will function as media's own watchdog and regulatory body."

Surely, the solution to some of our problems does not involve a strong (or in the Blueprint's Nietzschean language, "willful") state; sometimes, we need less government, not more. (That, in fact, may be the only way for other parts of the private sector to grow in maturity.)

But taken altogether, the Blueprint allows us to look beyond the sordid scandals that consume us, to an alternative future bright with the promise of possibilities.

That is a quality lacking in the Ramos-De Venecia proposals for Charter change. Not because the ideas themselves have no merit, but because the ideas have come to be identified with the men behind them. And because the ideas have been sold as a "graceful exit" for the Presidents. That is a pity. We believe, for instance, that the opportunities a parliamentary system provides for a non-disruptive change of government, through say a vote of no confidence, deserve a more thorough discussion.

Another way for the country to move forward is through the (admittedly) increasingly more unpopular idea of a Truth Commission. If there is anything that Environment Secretary Michael Defensor, a close Arroyo ally, has proven, with his hiring of an American forensic expert and the ensuing controversy that surrounded his presentation on Friday, it is the need for a neutral analysis of the Hello Garci tapes.

We think it strange that an opposition that is willing to accept new witnesses who have surfaced after it filed its amended impeachment complaint is now saying that it is too late for Defensor to offer an analysis of the tapes. If anything, pro-impeachment politicians should thank Defensor, for putting the spotlight back on the tapes. As we've said before: It's the tapes, stupid. Whatever its limitations, however, Defensor's expert analysis cannot be taken at face value.

But a Truth Commission can conduct an investigation that all parties can accept. It need not be an expensive proposition; we believe that even a short-term Commission with, say, Christian Monsod, Haydee Yorac and Harriet Demetriou as members, can be credible, competent—and decisive. We believe—because we must—in the power of good men and women to rise above even the most unpromising circumstances.

Not least, the participation of more political movements, like Kapatiran, in the public discourse can also help provide a way forward. Veteran political operators may look askance at such groups, which place ethical considerations ahead of practical concerns. Such groups certainly look like spoilers: fish out of very polluted water. But that may be the point. We need more Filipinos who, if they had to choose, would choose faithfulness to their principles over unprincipled success.

What's wrong with Mike Defensor?

"WHAT'S happening to Mike?" a friend asked me last weekend. He was referring, of course, neither to Sir Mike A nor Little Mikey but to Mike Defensor who is trying to look big in the eyes of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Mike Defensor it was who called a press conference last Friday to say that the "Hello Garci" tapes presented by lawyer Alex Poblete was "not authentic." To prove his point, he presented a technical report by an American expert and a Filipino self-styled "audio expert."

"It is my opinion," reported the American "expert," Steve Hickey, "based on the examination of the copy provided, that several anomalies exist which question the integrity of [the recordings]." Mike obviously expected to be hailed "a hero" for his efforts. Instead, he became a laughingstock. Even defenders of GMA and, therefore, his allies, are laughing.

Rep. Prospero Pichay moved GMA's staunchest defenders, dismissed Mike's report as "rubbish." "He (Mike) should be concentrating on the civil-common department's reformation program instead of trying to prove himself a sound expert," Pichay twitted him, adding that the report has "no additional probative value." Pegue, report-ally the source of the tapes given to Ochoa, had earlier admitted that he edited the tapes. Pichay said: The job of investigating the authenticity of the tapes belongs to the National Bureau of Investigation, not to Defensor, he added.

The NBI itself revealed that Mike's Filipino "audio expert" seems to be one of those "wannabes for sale," whose to the has suddenly made several leaps, from being a musician during the "expert," Jonathan Tongco, had earlier presented himself as a witness to the NBI, but the NBI rejected him. Tongco then gave his affidavit to reporters. Where reporters asked him about the charges of murder against him, he replied that the murder charges had been dismissed.

It was historian Secretary Angelo Reyes who revealed that Tongco was facing "numerous murder, estafa and several robberies." Tongco had earlier filed murder, kidnapping and graft charges against Reyes and assistant crusader Senator Ana Sec. Tongco accused the latter of staging the kidnapping of Chinoys.

Tongco had also presented himself to a senior Department of Justice official. "I sensed there was something wrong with him," the official said of Tongco. "I called the NBI and they warned me against [following] what he was saying."

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, another staunch defender of GMA, said he himself was "reluctant to believe" Tongco.

The shadowy part of Tongco Mike Defensor and other did not know or, knowing, disregarded. And so Defensor will decided to use him. Result: Salary-ery rest.

"Mike is like the bulldog in that old Mike," we joked said. "He is willing himself to look bigger than the other dogs in GMA's pond. One of these days, he will just burst from too much hot air."

Mike's capers don't look like an act of desperation. It is conceivable why he wanted time and money (taxpayers' money appropriated to the Department?) to fly to the United States and hire an American-trained technician to examine tapes that—they seem himself, Ingnia, already—were edited.

The tapes were taken by Ingnia from an original that played at least three hours long—the tape supposedly one with former Mindanao governor Sunny Dag. Ingnia said he edited it and provided a narration to make the listener understand the contents better. Therefore, any technician will find them "not authentic." Elementary any dimwitted will know that. Except Mike.

The other tapes that Sec. Public Lorenz and former Sen. Francisco Tatad had sent to Australia and the United States for examination have been declared "authentic." To remove any doubt, it should be the Sammy Dog tape that should be authenticated not just by any dimbulelay "expert," but by the Federal Bureau of Investigation or Scotland Yard.

But is that still necessary? President Macapagal-Arroyo herself has confessed that she talked on the phone to a "Comelec official" while the votes were still being counted. For that, she has apologized. Her own lawyer admitted that the official was Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano. Some Comelec officials have admitted that they were invited for dinner in the house of the President in La Vista, Quezon City. It was during this dinner, held before the elections—during which GMA reportedly asked the help of the Comelec officials—that GMA's former and lobbyist, Lilia Pineda, wife of impeached attorney Jose Pineda, distributed envelopes with money to GMA's supporter, according to Michaelangelo Tan. All the persons concerned denied Tan's claim.

Even without Tan's testimony, the mere fact that GMA invited Comelec officials to dinner in her home and talked on the phone to a Comelec commissioner—never mind what they talked about—is already a grave impropriety that makes her unfit to be President and Soldier: the suspicion that she and others colluded to rig the elections.

She was a candidate and anybody knows that a candidate talking to Comelec officials during an election is highly improper and unethical in the same way that a judge should not talk to a litigant while a pending case in his table.

By the way, it is ironic that this prize for GMA to invite people to lunch or dinner to ask for their help. Recently, as part of her media blitz to improve her public image, she invited Philippine journalists for lunch at Malacañang during which she asked for their help. Her effort was a success: some of the journalists did not want to go, but they were persuaded by Malacañang flunkies to attend. GMA probably knew that the affair was unethical because the journalists were let in not through the front entrance but through a side door.

Reminders

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiroz

impeachment. The central issue is legitimacy. The question is not how well or badly GMA rules. The question is whether she has the right to rule. The question is whether she is the President of the Philippines. The question is whether she has a mandate from the governed.

That is the heart of the matter. That is the crux of the matter. We do not have a legitimate President ruling us.

That, of course, is the one thing GMA and her cohorts have been desperately trying to put a distance from. "I want to clear this matter and move on," GMA herself said in her speech admitting she was the voice on the tape, although one can admit to murder and charge it to expedience. Well, what she wants and what she'll get are two different things. Her cohorts of course—not the least of them Fidel Ramos, who will soon be joined by former Pres. Fidel Valdez Ramos, "Cut and cut cheats"—have tried to help her get what she wants. And for a while, this hopeful country truly seemed destined to forget that GMA ever said bullshit (or cute).

My sentimental thanks to Mike Defensor for reminding this nation that did. Some senators stand why Pichay should be so pissed off. It's enough to make you believe God really works in mysterious ways. Or that people are really meant to serve a useful purpose in life, even if they themselves do not know how.

It's a case where the medium is the message. The contents of Defensor's defense are may safely forget. It is based on the word of a self-proclaimed Filipino composer expert who is facing several charges of murder, estafa and extortion, according to Angelo Reyes; and an American who himself finds his findings inconclusive and is not averse to entering them upon examination of the "mother of all tapes." The scientific basis and technical legalities are lost on me, but we may of ascertaining whether the tape was tampered with or merely edited.

In fact, no one has made a more truncated case for the veracity of the tape than Defensor himself when she apologized for it. There, see, no one—certainly not GMA and her lawyers and company—it is enough to make you believe people serve a useful purpose in life, unbeknownst to them—when they commend her, while completely believing in her crime, that it would never last long to save up on her crime. GMA never denied that she spoke with Garci about the election results—"I was anxious to protect my votes during that time." She never denied the contents of the tape, she never referred to any portion of it being doctored. You know you're being funnily screwed of a crime, you valid not admit and apologize, you will not save your reputation and face for long.

100% confession by itself is proof of a crime. Whether the tape is doctored or not can only show the extent of the crime, it can never refute the existence of the crime. The law is not that stupid. It is not that easily outwitted. Since about election results, least of all the President, as no conversation of that sort may ever be presumed to be innocent. No one may do that and go on to become the country's most powerful figure, the one person set up for the people's—especially the youth's—emulation. What GMA did, as any ordinary citizen will tell you, is not a cause for reward, it is a cause for punishment. What GMA did, as the Revised Penal Code of the Philippines will tell you, is not choice for going to Malacañang, it is a basis for going to Muntinlupa.

Again, I must thank Mike Defensor more profusely for reminding us of the Garci tape and what it must profoundly signifies.

He have no President in this country.

Jointly or separately

SOUNDING BOARD

By Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

SOMETIME ago I was consoled by a friend, who was a distinguished lawyer, upon smoothing the frame of legislation, that the debates, where I said that the two houses of Congress should vote separately when proposing amendments, did not in real truth matter at the moment of consideration. My opinion, then, however, I have no opposite party, a friend, who listened to Speaker Jose de Venecia speak before a recent forum on parliamentary government, said that the honorable Speaker cited a relative of mine, where I supposedly said that the two houses should vote jointly when proposing amendments.

Well, at least I should be grateful that my relative is dead, even if sometimes maligned, deliberately or otherwise. I don't think is true. Chesterton once said, "We can never undo the past." But we can undo it. Or can we? But for the record, and for the benefit of the Speaker—if indeed he attributed to me something that never said—let me clear things up.

What the Speaker is reported as having said is an indictment that, out of Congress's decades-long pass-amendments to the Constitution, there will be a battle royal involving the question of whether the two houses of Congress should vote jointly or separately. Hence, the Speaker is suggesting the move. It had already been signed into law). Congress proposes amendments, a vote on a constitutional amendment, and, therefore, it is not bound by the normal rules that govern Congress's legislative work.

I begin with a fundamental principle. We have agreed for a bicameral Congress. When the 1986 Constitutional Commission was drafting the current Constitution, the debate on the introduction of unicameralism was intense. I took the side of bicameralism. When the manner of voting came, the vote I favored, the unicameral side, lost. So, by one vote. The final vote was for bicameralism. 22-22.

I remember saying how glad I do not regret having lost that vote. Today, I thank all the 23 who voted against unicameralism. In retrospect, I now believe that if we had voted for unicameralism, the UK military hasn't would probably still be in Subic and Clark. Likewise, it has had wood for unicameralism, regardless of term limits or any elimination of terms, would be a done deal by now.

The chance to throw out bicameralism was deliberate. One of the reasons proposed in support of bicameralism was that it allowed for mutual control. Commissioner "Joe" Rodrigo, speaking from 14 years experience in the Senate, gave a practical illustration which, I suspect, is also operative today. He said:

"This was the experience in the Senate of which I was a member for 12 years. There were times when we were in session and Speaker Pepe Laurel would come up and say 'Say, suppose kung napabuksan ng bill dito si Jovie Salonga, maaaring hindi ko gusto pero hindi ako makakaboto at sa isang bill. Kapit sa isang bahala si Senator, pagusto ko naman ang bill sa pero.' This happened several times. And, of course, since the senators were elected at large like the President of the Philippines, they could stand up to the President, and that can be counted to his face. The senators could refuse the President to what take a stand against that of the President even if the President belongs to their own party."

Bicameralism means two houses acting unconsciously and economically checking each other. This is a fundamental principle in any Constitution. The two houses work separately. That is the general rule. The larger House may not send to the smaller house without the latter knowing it at all, the Constitution says so. And whenever the Commission says that the two houses have to agree, the Constitution is careful to dispel any notion that consensus is thereby being put aside in such circumstances—as when declaring a state of war, or acting on a board of canvassers for presidential and vice presidential elections—the Constitution is careful to state that, even in joint sessions, they should vote separately. Similarly, the 1935 Constitution, which said that subject proposing amendments Congress should be "in joint session assembled," was careful to specify that even then the two houses should vote "separately."

The present Constitution now says: "Any amendment to, or revision of, this Constitution may be proposed by: (1) the Congress, upon a vote of three-fourths of all its members . . ." The power to act as Congress "all its members" is the power to act as Congress "all its members" in joint session. They can vote where they are. They are empowered to propose amendments as they are where they are. Congress, as is, is simply given the power to propose. Therefore, that is the power to propose amendments.

Indeed, the two houses may agree to come together for a joint session. Existing together does not nullify the bicameral character of Congress. The two houses remain two houses even if they are two houses sitting as a unicameral body. Voting separately, however, is of the essence in a bicameral Congress. It cannot be voluntarily surrendered or else by the House or by the Senate.

Finally, the constitutional debate was a measure of legislation. The two houses, therefore, should act as a bicameral legislature—voting separately, able to check each other, and not reduced to one unconscious body marching to the same direction. Let us hope that the Senate will not surrender its autonomy to the larger house.

Witches' brew

If you think the heated discussions of the impeachment rich-flap decision buried by the impeachment are all garbage, take a look at the garbage in.

Other than election fraud, many of the over a dozen charges against the President are indeed mind-boggling. For example,

- The President's approval of the EARI Law. "The opposition's EARI Law is another act of betrayal of public trust," screaming, to better illustrate their lawyer Hilario Davide's Fifth Supplemental affidavit. So, will all the legislators who voted for the passage of the EARI Law also face impeachment?

COMMENTARY

Rigoberto D. Tiglao

- The President's refusal "to meet one-on-one with Mrs. Imelda Marcos" now "to negotiate the 75-25 compromise agreement on the Hyatt 10 property" (With Supplemental Affidavit). I'm sure Imelda is dying to be a witness in this charge.

The following are charges now in the "Additional Complaint" filed July 22 by the opponents and other Get-It-Digest people:

- "Human rights violations": "killings of political dissidents and infringements of their freedoms of expression and assembly...perpetrated by the members and agents of the AFP." The left wants to point out of its time again, that even in 2003 now, but in 1986 when people under the Marcos dictatorship could not even hold a rally without getting killed by either them the Presidents, the armed forces will be the accused here. The AFP has instituted its investigations to the Commission on Human Rights then the alleged killings were casualties in the anti-insurgency campaign. With their change, the Commission on Human Rights then the gunfire that wounded claiming that the military will see the gun down.

- Implementing the North Rail Project. Why are the this in the impeachment when it logically belongs, if the charge had any merit? Because the charge exercise into the Philippines during every congressman who knows Spanish, Jose de Venecia, who represented the Chinese government in favor in the project. This charge amounts to torpedo what would be an epochal project that would link Manila to the northern provinces in the same manner that railways became the engine of growth of the economies of the United States of the 20th century. Sampson said, the ambassador of the People's Republic of China said: "Please keep reading articles out of Secretary."

- Not implementing Project Number 10 contract. But it was the Supreme Court itself which ruled the contract unconstitutional. The Court's decision, penned by Justice MVF itself, closed the door to that case against those who signed the impeachment complaint. It makes the ridiculous charge that she ordered the $33 million from Pagcor for the government to open the terminal. Coincidentally or not, the Pagcor received over the same huge profits lawyers for the purported jueteng protectors.

- Philhealth Cards: Only in the Philippines will a head of state be impeached for making available health insurance for 40 million of its citizens. 33 million of whom are the poorest of the poor.

- Road Users Tax Projects: Only in the Philippines will a head of state be impeached for implementing a law (RA 8794) of June 2000 to maintain roads.

- Deactivation of the Southern Philippines Development Authority and the downgrading of the National Electrification Administration: I kid you not.

Another impeachment charge, now which Daddy more probably will be more explosive:

- That the President "prevented the Piso Centennial" to stay away from the country (Third Supplemental Affidavit).

The impeachment charges look more like an obnoxious aviator' have wherein everyone in the room wants to add his or her own special point ingredient.

The ingredients for the Erap Pit-cocoon farce that were delivered in 2000, the obvious fraud charges, Big Jog speaks has been in the refrigerator for three years. Its ingredients will not be illegally acquired wiretaps. These are inadmissible in any proceeding according to the Anti-Wire Tapping Law. In the first place, the they really accurate recordings of conversations' can Erdita, Ilocos and foreign experts concluded that the tapes were either spliced or had serious anomalies.

The ingredients for the Left "human rights violations" and the UNE.

Throw in the ingredients that the President should be impeached for not negotiating a settlement with the family of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. That would bring in the remnants of the Marcos forces.

In those exciting days before the many in Congress would not want to gulp this witches' brew—intended not for enjoying else but as drug people's minds to join another kind of mob.

Analyze the sequence of events of the past two months, and the real purpose of the impeachment. The impeachment started in early June and then the alleged rapes suffered a week later. The impeachment complaints were made between June 23 and July 22. The Gloria Arroyo campaign started in June July 8, when on that day the following events occurred: the start of the testimonies, the media rally at the Edsa Shrine, and the Makati Business Club meeting by the Ortigas wing of the Liberal Party. Jojo Binay's Makati rally that evening was supposed to be the culmination of that step through press conferences.

That ultimative fell on its face, and people have started to ignore the opposition's rallies. The Get-It-Digest people's agitation to oust a President elected by 12.9 million Filipinos through an impeachment process, which everything but the kitchen sink will be thrown against her.

The joke's now senseless. Erapps a Stupid Power when Congress throws out the impeachment complaint.

The Estrada impeachment has had the wisdom to realize that the impeachment process would degenerate into a bureaucratic morgue for an immoral opposition hurling a plethora of baseless charges against a President, and telling them Congress away from important local law-making duty. In many ways, the impeachment process is a reflection of the only one impeachment complaint per year. A undoubtedly this may mean, but only rules can put reforming unrealistic as big.

That brilliant Australian," the witches in Shakespeare's Macbeth intoned. Things are serious when they swear.

For Gloria and her allies, the impeachment process has "to" a time that was only of the Colosseum, but of their existence sense. Her meeting with Imelda Marcos as grounds for impeachment? The Peace and Order that issues?

For Congress to finish the inquiry only to the first human complaints may come final. It is really being fair to Congress'—and to all Filipinos'—time and energies.

Rigoberto Tiglao is the head of the Presidential Management Staff. He was an Inquirer columnist before he joined government in 2001. The views in this column are his own and should not be construed as official views of the Office of the President.—Ed.

Interview with a phantom

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Nassefeo Mustafa

IT was one of those times that brought on again that fateful feeling where you often imagine yourself wander-lip-deeper that was made or found, or whether that was simply because your mind as the narrative is that you had spent down by future beyond your control.

I was still grappling in some to some with the fears of the function Sultana Elena Kinagapal the Sultan of Maguindanao which seemed to be for the most vague display of political chicanery I have ever seen in my lifetime), when she giggled an otherwise that she was to be one charmed in the Philippines. Her reputation for her crossing a matter apparently has made her a "maybe."

Change the system, change the structure, she said, refining how decades into the early hatches of military officers and an elite extension of his family and cronies into a "political economy." and when Marcos sent to the Asian Institute of Management and the Development Academy of the Philippines to be sensationed into sensible "management practices" of citizenship"—she remembers who would fill the "old country" and ex-servers into the "new".

(Those values about about changing the social distribution of wealth and power were lulled, but they were never remembered.)

This she said a group of infants who, she said, would be fed and nurtured to mature that their preservation would be brighter than hers—so they could create a political system that would use her as means as hers; assuming, of course, that they would have enough to rise to survive that long.

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I don't know about those

Discovering new solutions

LETTERS

IT is such a relief to read a positive account of our future in these days of gloomy predictions. I refer to Randy David's Aug. 7 column, where he sees new possibilities for the Philippines.

Despite the continuous political strife, David correctly identifies new openings for the future. Filipinos have seen that there are many opportunities abroad for those who are denied them at home. In dark recesses, they recognize the inequities of feudal life and realize that there are better ways of sharing and distributing social, cultural and economic resources.

A more equitable society is humanly achievable. But it requires appropriate skills, attitudes and knowledge. The old ways are inadequate. Increasingly, we have to invent or discover new solutions. These new ways involve risks and will only work if structures of class endogamy break. Hence, we seem to be caught in a dilemma. How does the old adapt to longer needs, when we are to establish structures of trust for yet unnamed adventures?

The answer lies in a vigorous, connected and informed public sphere. The new media, including the Internet and mobile phones, have finally removed class monopolies over participation in public life. Now they do as well with what consequences are still to be determined. But one thing is certain—the old shibboleths no longer apply. Tradition and experience are no longer guarantees of success. Only information, creativity and resourcefulness can ensure the country's future. Filipinos have done qualities as much as foreigners, but they need to apply them to be more confident. In this context, the education of the Filipino becomes the most important element for personal and collective survival.

—RAUL PEDEGLORIA
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Ateneo de Manila University
Katipunan Avenue, Loyola Heights, QC

Thanks for the blessings of peace, faith and hope

MY children and I thank former Supreme Court Justice Jose Vicente Mendoza Cruz and the Supreme Court Special Division of Five for the decision in the case entitled, "The Heirs of Javier case," (934, 8/5/05).

The decision made me realize the painful events of February 1986 and brought about peace, healing, faith and hope.

It has helped ease the pain and despair which came with the unjust decision of the then-Special Regional Trial Court in Dumaguete City, Branch 30, dated June 1994. These past few days have been thinking of the 1986 Supreme Court decision in the case Doris Javier vs. Commission on Elections.

I ponder on this great blessing as I pray for the eternal repose of Raul Roco, my husband's pro bono lawyer in the case. My deepest appreciation and gratitude to the family of Raul Roco, Justice Isagani Cruz and the incumbent.

—PRUDENCIA LUPELLA JAVIER
AND CHILDREN
(widow and family of Doris Javier)

Not deserving of Libingan ng mga Bayani

IN 1ST July 30 column, Alex Tulfo urged the burial of former President Ferdinand Marcos in the Libingan ng mga Bayani, arguing that if lesser mortals—like his father and grandfather who fought in Bataan—could be buried there, why not a former president of the country?

Being a former president is not enough justification for Marcos to be buried there. Of our 10 dead former presidents, only Carlos Garcia and Diosdado Macapagal are deserving there.

Marcos was a World War II soldier and a former president, but we must never forget his misdeeds that caused the country pain and agony: the imprisonment of his political opponents, the closure of all media outlets critical of him and his government, the 10,000 hectral law victims, and the country's foreign debts.

When Marcos assumed office in 1965, the country's foreign debt was less than $200 million. When he was ousted in 1986, it had ballooned to $26 billion. The premium that followed Marcos had to borrow to pay those debts. Hence, today about half of our yearly national budget goes to debt servicing, instead of being used for public roads, highways, bridges, cable lines, sidewalk, schools, hospitals, low-cost housing and other developmental and poverty-alleviation projects.

We have become a more impoverished nation not only because of graft and corruption but also because about half of our annual financial income goes to paying the debts incurred by him. It seems that the country's no longer in the position to victims of Filipinos to get out of the gangsterist era which Marcos had pushed us.

Marcos was one president who did much harm to this country. If our grandchildren, great-grandchildren and, in fact, great-grandchildren will still be paying the debts he accumulated, it is tantamount to his name as economy ruiner in the history of the country.

—JESUS BOYLES,
Block 8 Lot 28,
Kalayaan Village,
1100 Diliman City

More on textbook errors

[illegible] must, as an English teacher, to the point activities "There are two errors." [FILA/12/05]

The controversy can be resolved by the textbook writers themselves if they see their books and correct such errors. Or their publishers bill the responsibility to verify unacceptable English in print. Some of their flaws may be justifiable in context, some may be inherent in our inner language current, some may be a carryover of speaking and writing habits from the secondary to graduate school, some may be fragmented presentation of concepts, some may be simply inadequate piling of ideas expressed in English. At any rate, errors in textbooks, if uncorrected, remain errors for years and are eventually passed on to students. The students are the schoolchildren of readers, teachers and other textbook writers. How can educators of English, semilanguages or unacceptable English in published materials for our elementary and high school students?

If only to entertain the textbook writers to take a second look at their work cognizantly and occasionally for the sake of our young learners, may I cite some glaring errors and make corrections.

1. "Overcoming English Today"

Just seeing the English language success in meeting the Overcoming of English they missing an added to contrast to the current trend of normative, communicative and learner-centered English.

2. "Empty Science in the Next Century"

Simply a set subject. Aside from its connotative implication, it cannot technically precede Science as a noun. And why develop the Science "Next Century"?

3. present — a certain object [context necessary, right?]

4. Verb — set common (correct) definition of "bad" as reflection of "no/bad hunting" implying between the date and, not confined to one subject.

5. fell in love as a man [context please: fell in love with a man]

6. All two [verb in one noun correct identification circle with one circle]

7. Life is so much better now that I'd like to turn back the time. [illogical] Logical: Life is so much better now unlike the sad past. Or to keep the original idea, "I'd like to turn back time to see how much better life is now").

—ALICE I. OH,
PCIC, Bajbag, Leyte 6521

UK's travel warnings

IN THE JULY 25 issue of the Inquirer, it was reported that the United Kingdom had issued an advisory warning to disable against traveling to the Philippines because of terrorist attacks targeting "tourists, anywhere" in the country.

The advisory further states that, "There is a high threat of terrorism throughout the Philippines. We continue to believe that terrorist are planning attacks against both Philippine and British interests."

Look who's talking. Just very recently, terrorists carried out simultaneous bombings in the heart of London, the United Kingdom's capital, killing many that left civilians and injuring hundreds. Two of the four known members of bombing attacks was carried out also in London but is killed—not because authorities were vigilant, but because the terrorists made mistakes.

Why should we believe British intelligence is so advanced to encourage its citizens to abandon the United Kingdom and live in the Philippines or elsewhere where they will be safer.

As for the Philippine government, it should issue its own travel advisory warning Filipinos to avoid the United Kingdom—not because of terrorist threats but because of trigger-happy and nervous police authorities who have now killed [illegible] people. Only after investigation they [illegible] admitted their mistakes.

If the British can't profer attacks even on their homeland, they should be reminded to mind their own business and stop meddling in internal affairs in foreign countries.

—ERNIE ABATA,
ernie_abata@yahoo.com

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of issues and people by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yakal and Makarulo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-2088, 897-0783, 897-0786, or e-mail readers@inquirer.com.ph.

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

WE SUPPORT JAPAN'S CONSTITUTION WHICH PROHIBITS THE MAINTENANCE OF ARMED FORCES

ARTICLE 9 OF THE JAPANESE CONSTITUTION

1 Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

2 In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.

●ARTICLE 9 of Japan's Constitution is a clear promise by the people of Japan to the world, particularly to the Asia-Pacific people, to never repeat its history of war and colonization.

ARTICLE 9 sets the important challenge of working towards world peace through dialogue, confidence building, and mutual cooperation, and not by military means.

We support ARTICLE 9 – which renounces war and prohibits the maintenance of armed forces – in order to promote peace in the region and throughout the world, today and for the future.

We ask you to join us and help spread support for ARTICLE 9 around the world.

This public notice is part of the Global ARTICLE 9 Campaign, which seeks to promote international support and understanding for the philosophy and maintenance of Japan's Peace Constitution, namely ARTICLE 9. This campaign has been initiated by organizations working on conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the Asia-Pacific region, with Japan-based NGO Peace Boat <www.peaceboat.org> as the regional secretariat.

Endorsing organizations: INITIATIVES FOR INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE • MINDANAO PEOPLES CAUCUS • INSTITUTE FOR POPULAR DEMOCRACY • ALLIANCE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PEOPLE'S RIGHTS • PEACE ADVOCACY NETWORK • PEACE EDUCATION CENTER • PHILIPPINE ALLIANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATES • PHILIPPINE CAMPAIGN TO END THE DEATH PENALTY • PHILIPPINE CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM • PHILIPPINE COALITION FOR THE ICC • PHILIPPINE NETWORK FOR ECUMENISM AND TRANSFORMATION • PHILIPPINE NETWORK ON EDUCATION • PHILIPPINE PEACE INITIATIVE • PHILIPPINE PEACE MONITORING GROUP • PHILIPPINE PEACE NOW MOVEMENT • PHILIPPINE SOLIDARITY NETWORK AGAINST WAR AND TERRORISM • PHILIPPINES FOR PEACE • PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF THE PHILIPPINES • PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY OF THE PHILIPPINES • RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FOR PEACE • SAMAHAN NG MGA EX-DETAINEE LABAN SA DETENSYON AT PARA SA KALAYAAN • SAMAHAN NG MGA MANGGAGAWANG KRISTIYANO PARA SA KATARUNGAN • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF BACOLOD • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF KALOOKAN • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF MALOLOS • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF PARANAQUE • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF TARLAC • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF TUGUEGARAO • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF VIRAC • SOCIAL ACTION CENTER OF THE DIOCESE OF ZAMBOANGA

Across the NATION

Bombing suspects fall guys, say solons

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Basilan Rep. Gerry Salapuddin and Anak Mindanao Party-list Rep. Mujiv Hataman have called on the police and military to immediately free the three suspects in the Aug. 10 bombings here.

"The police and military presented some fall guys to keep up the pressure of coming up with a solution on the bombing incidents," Hataman, a native of Zamboanga City, said in a statement.

Salapuddin, on the other hand, said those arrested are innocent, and that "the real bombers may just be somewhere out laughing at us."

On Thursday, a day after the twin attacks, local police and the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Western Mindanao arrested several persons for questioning, including those injured in the blast at Susie Anne's Restaurant there.

On Friday, Mayor Celso Lobregat and Zamboanga City Police Director Supt. Benjamin Co presented as suspects Ashraw Abdula, Amsin Alabado and Hawarin Ganuna, all natives of Tipo-Tipo, Basilan.

The suspects have been charged with multiple frustrated murder.

Lobregat said a witness identified the suspects as the ones who placed a bomb under a motorcycle owned by lawyer Alfredo Catarata. He said the suspects were this forged bandila appearing in Tipo-Tipo.

But Alabarayo denied the allegations, saying he was in the city to renew their passports.

Salapuddin said he checked on Alabarayo and found that he was indeed renewing his passport at the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"He resides in Sabah, Malaysia. He just arrived few weeks ago to renew his working documents," he said.

Sumsir and Alabarayo volunteered to help Alabarayo and his wife Sadiya in getting their marriage papers, Salapuddin said.

Hataman also said it was impossible for the suspects to be members of the Basilan group because Tipo-Tipo is known for being "hostile" to the Abu Sayyaf.

Salapuddin also said the police have arrested the suspects to force them to admit to the crime.

But Lobregat denied this. Julie Alipala, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

ZAMBOANGA CITY Mayor Celso Lobregat (seated center) with Vice Mayor Beng Climaco (seated left) present to the media suspects Ashraw Alabarayo, Angso Asnarin Alabula and Hawarien Sahapuddin Sumsir in the twin bombings in Zamboanga City last Wednesday

Environmentalists assail lifting of marine park's closure order

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' handling of the case of Oceana Adventures, the first marine park in the country, has posed a "clear and present danger" to the country's environment, eight environmental and animal rights groups said.

The DENR issued a closure order on Oceana Adventure on Aug. 3 but lifted it seven days later.

The groups said the order's lifting allowed the park to continue operations without an environmental compliance certificate (ECC).

What the DENR has done, they said, showed a shift from a position of sensitivity to a "direction" of the government's strict environmental impact assessment system (Presidential Decree 1586).

The law enforced after 1985, prescribes stringent requirements and processes on how the operations of businesses would not harm the environment.

The ECC, a government-issued permit, binds the companies to adopt technologies and activities in controlling air, water and land pollution.

"This direction of the law would now allow environmentally critical projects to operate without an ECC, and may be in that of being penalized," the Earth Island Institute-Philippines, Philippine Animal Welfare Society, Tanggol Kalikasan, Companion and Responsibility for Animals, Bangon Kalikasan Movement, Subic, Center for Environmental Concerns and the Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment said in a statement.

In reversing the most-appointed closure order, the DENR, the park operator Subic Bay Marine Exploratorium Inc. (SBMEI) and the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority that issued the park's ECC, risk being tried for contempt, the groups said.

They said the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau should not have issued the ill-order because the SBMEI had yet to ensure many technical, environmental and animal welfare issues since it operated in February 2002, here.

In a resolution on May 4 this year, the Department of Justice also found that SBMEI violated the Animal Welfare Act (Republic Act 8485) by not registering its operations with the Bureau of Animal Industry. The BAI has issued the SBMEI a notice of non-compliance.

Lawyer Claudio Teehankee Jr., counsel of Oceana, said her decision to lift the closure order did not mean that the DENR had reneged on its responsibilities.

Claudio said she allowed the SBMEI to temporarily operate after the SBMA endorsed the appeal of the company and gave assurances that the latter's continued operations posed no grave threat to the environment.

The SBMA, according to her, agreed to undergo a validation of its SBMA-issued ECC and abide by DENR's rules.

The DENR, Claudio said, was enforcing the environmental impact assessment statute at the steepest note that the court had upheld the regulatory power of the DENR over the SBMA.

But this, she said, would not be done in such a way that it would disrupt the operations of some 1600 tourists at the freeport.

SBMEI officials told the Inquirer on Friday that legal and ethical issues raised by their critics were "without basis."

SBMEI chief executive officer Tim Lee, owner, president and chief operating officer John Canonan and vice president for corporate affairs Evangeline Magdaraog said their firm was "ready to comply with the civil servant actions of both agencies DENR and SBMA of government."

They also said they were "ready at any time to cooperate with the BAI with equal transparency" after the statement from the Department of Agriculture.

On the ethical aspects, Canonan said the whales, dolphins and sea lions the entertainment facilities were rescued in China and raised in health to include by here.

The deaths of three whales in the park since 2002 were due to negligence of improper care, he said.

Xinhua Ocias, *PDI Central Luzon Chief*

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Neri seeks funds for watersheds

CLARK (PNA) — March of the official development assistance (ODA) that the Philippines received in recent years have gone mostly to flood control infrastructure instead of watershed management and rehabilitation, Budget Secretary Romulo Neri said.

The trend should be reversed in favor of sustainable environment, according to the former economic-planning secretary.

He noted the ODA spending trend in a speech at the opening of the two-day Central Luzon Integrated Water Resource Management Summit here recently.

In particular, he said, Central Luzon and Agusan del Sur had ODA-funded engineering interventions in mitigating floods but not all of these provided efficient solutions.

ODA funds are foreign grants and low-interest loans payable in less than 50 years.

Neri, however, could not distinctly cite the total amount funneled through the ODA but said at least P18 billion had been spent in Central Luzon alone following Mt. Pinatubo's eruption in 1991 and the resumption of disaster it wrought.

"Many of these projects really tend to favor construction rather than really get the real results that you want," he said.

The best way to ensure an adequate supply of water, as a capital for social and economic development, was to sustain the watersheds that feed river systems, he added.

ODA money, Neri said, went more to infrastructure than rehabilitation because donors and lenders were "geared to give contracts to big foreign construction."

Asked on the reason behind this, he said: "It was part of their business." "Foreign governments would give us money to help up their own industries," he said.

ODA funds come with provisions that require the use of foreign consultants, technology and equipment.

The government, he said, was trying to reduce the borrowing of ODA funds.

He said the World Bank was now willing to "do or not approve" his proposal that Japanese donors would also refer the same attitude.

Neri urged some 100 summit participants, mostly heads of regional agencies and local officials, to go for "holistic solutions."

Managing, allocating and distributing water, as a resource, is a complex work, he said, adding that government should consider the scientific, social and economic dimensions of water management.

Tonnie Dreiss, PDI Central Luzon Desk

STORM'S FURY
Members of the Candon City Disaster Coordinating Council remove tree branches that litter the streets of Ilocos Sur a day after Storm "Huaning" battered the province.

Defensor orders retrieval of trees uprooted in Aurora, Quezon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO — Environment officials in Aurora and Quezon on Monday mapped out plans to retrieve more than 100,000 cubic meters of uprooted trees before heavy rains loosen these down and trigger flash floods and landslides in about 130 villages on the Sierra Madre mountain ranges.

The retrieval operation, which would be completed in two months, was ordered by Environment Secretary Michael Defensor following an appeal by Sen. Richard Gordon to save communities at risk.

Defensor's ring. I memorandum outlined the steps in which the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would assist in disaster preparedness measures.

In the memorandum, Defensor shut down operations that involved operation area over all to the resumption of logging, which he banned on Dec. 8 last year following flash floods and landslides that hit Aurora and Quezon.

"The instrument to be issued by the [regional executive directors] for this purpose shall not in any way be construed as lifting of the logging ban in Aurora and Quezon," he said.

The logging moratorium "shall continue to be in force and effect," he said.

Defensor said he ordered the retrieval operations "to avoid a repeat of the [2004 tragedy]."

More than 1,000 people died in the disaster on the heels of four typhoons that struck the provinces in November and December last year. It was the worst disaster that hit Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog in the last 50 years, local officials and residents said.

Defensor also ordered the DENR regional executive directors in the investigation of environmental crimes and violations in the areas, and to file charges against those responsible for illegal logging activities.

The retrieval operation, closely monitored by the secretary of the logs, citing the cities that posed to environmental risks.

For retrieval operations, closed down by conflicts claims and controversies to local governments, gathered only 5,571.45 cubic meters in Dingalan and Infanta, reports showed.

At least 6,000 cubic meters of recovered logs are at the Ramon Magsaysay Technological University in the Department of Social Welfare and Development in residents whose houses were destroyed by the flashfloods and landslides.

Ed Aste, Defense Secretary Antonio Cruz Jr., National Disaster Coordinating Council chair, also sought "immediate action" on the issue.

Tonnie Dreiss, PDI Central Luzon Bureau

10 dead, 14 hurt in road accidents

TEN persons died and 14 were injured in two accidents yesterday in Albay and South Cotabato.

In Camalig, Albay, four members of a family and a driver died while three others were seriously injured when the passenger jeep they were riding in collided with a bus along the Maharlika Highway in Barangay Liboo at about 6:30 a.m. yesterday.

Camalig police chief Senior Insp. Rogelio Imperial identified the fatalities as Herbert Diaz, 35, jeepney driver of Barangay Bonot, Camalig; Melchor Bonon, 47, his wife Mary Ann, 35, daughter Bernadette, 11, and son Peter, 7, all of Barangay Sabsaban, Daraga, Albay.

Two other Bicolano children — Jomar L. 3, and Jubilee, 8, — were seriously injured.

Imperial said the two and another seriously injured victim, Ramon Machado Fernando, of Barangay Maopong, Daraga, Albay, were being treated at the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital in Legazpi City.

The Diaz family was on their way to hear Mass at the Our Lady of Assumption Parish in Camalig when the accident occurred, police said.

The family usually heard Mass in their hometown of Daraga but decided to go to Camalig because it was closer.

Imperial said the jeepney driver lost control of the vehicle when it was overtaken by an unidentified vehicle that cut its path.

He said the jeepney swerved to the left, but it collided with an approaching Executive Caroline bus, which is also from Daraga.

Ran driver Joel Rimaro was unhurt and is now detained at the Camalig jail.

In Polomolok, South Cotabato, five persons were killed while 11 others were hurt Saturday when a wayward bus smashed into a motorcycle on the national highway in Barangay Bagumbayan.

PO3 Gerry Bagacilo, traffic investigator of Polomolok police station, said the accident took place at around 7 p.m. after two buses from Tellers Bus Lines and Isuky road to collide each other. Upon reaching Bagumbayan, the TBL bus suddenly slowed down when it could not overtake on a motorcycle was speeding from the opposite line.

The driver of the trailing Isuky bus failed to hit the brakes and the vehicle smashed the rear of the TBL bus. The driver tried but failed to maneuver the vehicle from crossing the opposite lane. It hit the motorcycle which had five passengers on board.

Another motorcycle swerved to an open canal. Its driver and four passengers were hurt. Six bus passengers were hurt. — Michael Amoloro, PNC Southern Luzon Bureau and Agustin Evasco, PDI Mindanao Bureau

ROUNDUP

Trader robbed

CALOOCAN, Manila — A former security guard and two accomplices robbed a businessman of P60,000 on Saturday, police said. Vivian Dela Cruz, 38, of Barangay Maldenbarrio Sur here, and her husband were waiting for vegetable dealers at around 6:30 a.m. when the armed robbers, mobbed two dog-mounted motorcycles. The robbers fled in a tricycle. Responding policemen arrested two suspects, identified as Rolando Abrazos and Fortunato Sugar, who claimed that their other companion had the distributions.

Jodie Muñoz Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

1 killed in bar

TAYABAS, Quezon — A drunken many and a heated argument over which entertained led to the death of Rommel Valverde, 38, of Barangay Isaac Sanglimon on Tuesday. Police said Valverde and several his companions were having a drink inside the Wilson ATV Bar and Restaurant when they caught the eye of another group as they competed for the attention of a stripper and for the longest beer argument. one of the suspects suddenly shot the victim several times in different parts of the body. Valverde was declared dead on arrival at the hospital. The assailant and his two other companions fled. Last policemen outlawed their other companions inside the bar.

Jodie Muñoz Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Town councilor held

SIA, Zamboanga — A councilor here was arrested for allegedly shooting and killing a former village official in a beach resort on Tuesday. Police said Councilor Danilo Sabanorza, 56, was arrested in a resort at the Vitalez-Lopez beach resort and was detained at the municipal jail. Sabanorza reportedly shot Noel Dal, 43, a former village chief of Lanuza in Pilosang town, while the latter was in a table at the resort. Although wounded, Dal was able to run out of the hotel and shouted, "Sabanorza shot me." He died on the way to Mariano Flores, who accompanied him to the resort, took him to the Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Hospital. Several shooters failed to survive him. Sabanorza, mentioned reporters' requests for an interview. — Ze-nar Elde, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Gang member nabbed

LEGAZPI CITY — Police arrested on Tuesday night a member of the Martinez Gang, a notorious robbery-gang specializing here and in neighboring towns, while preparing to rob another house in the University Village on the city outskirts. City police chief Supt. Gerardo Espia identified the suspect as Oscar Peñaranda, 28, of Bayabas town. Police seized from him several pieces of jewelry, a penlight, a knife, hammer and unspecified chains. The gang operates by studying the movements of target houses. It sells the stolen jewelry in pawnshops. Espia said.

Jodie Muñoz Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

USAID taps schools in energy conservation bid

BAGUIO CITY—A US donor agency is pushing energy conservation for provinces at available fuel prices hiking Asia closer to an energy crisis.

The US Agency for International Development's (USAID) Energy and Clean Air Project (Enap) has neared the silent pace by which local governments institute energy conservation measures, said Arlene Guzance, Enap deputy chief of party.

Guzance-Sioco, a USAID consultant and Enap chief of party, said donor agencies were reserving to the country's network of universities instead.

By tapping the resources of over 300 universities, Enap is tapping the academe to advocate clean energy and energy conservation in their areas, he said.

Cuzo signed partnership deals with the University of the Cordilleras and the University of Baguio on July 25 to jump-start a university-led clean air campaign in Baguio.

The agreements were forged as President Macapagal-Arroyo announced in her State of the Nation Address in July that her administration would push for legislation benefiting renewable and indigenous power to cushion the country from unavoidable prices.

Sioco said donor agencies were concerned about the fate of foreign-assisted projects in the country which cut their momentum as soon as funds dried up.

"Once [the government] implements the project, it is gone and forgotten. We are hoping that the academe... will hold on Clean energy programs after the project ends," he said.

The city is piloting a clean fuel program and a water management program introduced by the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI). It is one of the beneficiaries of the USAID-financed Clean Cities Program.

The Enap windblows donor role, or USAID projects by assisting with local governments to help draw up ordinances or policies that would apply the project results, Sioco said.

Sioco said donor agencies had also started reviewing the impact of the projects on the provinces.

Inter and the USAID Clean Cities Program have been promoting a mixed use of diesel fuel and coconut methyl ester (coco biodiesel) for Baguio's public utility vehicles. Manuel Cabreza, PNA/Northern Luzon Bureau

PNP eyes planting coffee in marijuana farms

By Alex Pal
PNA Visayas Bureau

SAMAR (LUZON)—The Philippine National Police is looking into the possibility of stamping out the marijuana problem by replacing the illegal crop with another addictive but equally lucrative substance—coffee.

PNP Deputy Director General Rhoda de Leon, commander of the anti-illegal drug operations task force, said they would be looking into coffee varieties that would grow in areas formerly planted to marijuana.

"We [police] is no issue that after the soil is planted to it, no other crop can grow there," De Leon told reporters Friday while on a mission visit to this city and Region 8 in general, where he met provincial commander of the Defense Philippine Constabulary-Integrated National Police (PC/INP) from 1986 to 1990.

He said the idea of planting coffee in areas while marijuana plantations) was hatched during a meeting of anti-drug advocates at the Camp Lukban headquarters Region recently.

The Philippines is exporting Barako (Mataas) coffee to Arab countries, which have grown to love Philippine coffee, he said.

Recent satellite operations have revealed that marijuana use is again on the rise because of the scarcity of shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride).

He made the comments after Councilor Rod de Jesus, who is also a doctor specialized with the Dangerous Drugs Board, proposed the legalization of marijuana in order to unload the police of the burden of running after marijuana users.

De Jesus cited an increasing trend among advanced countries to decriminalize the use and cultivation of marijuana because of its medicinal and therapeutic value.

De Leon, however, contended that decriminalizing the cultivation or use of marijuana would create more problems. He noted studies that show that marijuana users tend to graduate to higher drugs, like shabu.

"I am happy that the law does not allow us the cultivation or use of marijuana," he said.

De Leon also frowned on suggestions to stop the use of shabu by mixing it with poison and selling them in the market to drug users.

"That will not be fair to drug users because some users are curious. Some users do not even want to take drugs but do so without knowing it," he said.

The PNP recently launched its new advertising program called the "Barilin Ko Iwas sa Droga" (My family does not need drugs), which also hopes to strengthen family ties.

Barilin, De Leon said, should impress their own coffee at home so that parents would monitor their children and keep them away from harmful drugs.

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PUBLACION BAUTISTA & REYES LAW OFFICES

Puerto repeals no-mining ordinance

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Barely two months after approving a landmark ordinance imposing a 25-year moratorium on mining, the city council repealed it, citing its enforcement with the National Mining Act.

The council, during its session, agreed that the ordinance might have some repercussions and its legality might be questioned because "it was in conflict with the national laws."

In late June, the city council unanimously approved Ordinance No. 270 that declared Palawan a mining-free land for 25 years.

The measure invoked the provisions of the Local Government Code (LGC) on the state policy that the territorial and political subdivisions shall enjoy genuine and meaningful autonomy.

The resolution further pointed out the LGC provision that states that "within their respective territorial jurisdictions, LGUs shall ensure and support, among other things, the preservation and enrichment of culture, promote health and safety, enhance the right of the people to a balanced ecology, and promote the general welfare and convenience of their inhabitants."

To preserve the remaining natural resources of Puerto Princesa and Palawan, the city prohibits all mining activities in the city.

The ordinance stated that "it shall be unlawful for any person or business entity to engage in land clearing, prospecting, exploration, drilling, excavation, mining, transport or sale, and area and such other activities in furtherance or preparation for mining explorations."

It also prohibited the implementation of project or program by government without the written consultation with the city government and without its prior approval.

Palawan NGO Network Inc. executive director Ofin Bernardino said she was saddened by the decision of the council.

Environmental Legal Assistance Center (Elac) attorney-executive director Ferdie Mayo-Anda said she had talked with city administrator and acting city legal officer Agustin Bonoanan to clarify the repeal of the moratorium ordinance. Elac has been lobbying for a mining moratorium in Palawan.

Bonoanan told her that the council based its decision on a Supreme Court decision that local councils had no right to prohibit the entry of a business artisan franchise, such as to in betting stations, is given by Congress.

"They don't want to be put in a position that they will be challenged," Anda said, "because it could be an ultra vires act, which means an act beyond their powers."

But she said there was no time in the moratorium ordinance because this was not the first time a local government enacted such kind.

"They have tried it in Cebu, Davao, Oriental Mindoro and Iloilo," Anda said.

If the city council was afraid, it could invoke the Tano vs. Socrates case, a landmark SC decision that supported the right of the local government to preserve its ecology through ordinances, she added.

"In provinces where there is a running moratorium, nobody is dragged to court," Anda said.

Since the city council still wanted a running moratorium, a possible alternative it talked about was a resolution expressing the city's sentiments stated.

Anda expressed willingness to help the city draft a resolution. Jajilo F. Duarte, PNA Southern Luzon Bureau

Honest janitor hailed

LUCENA CITY—The city council has commended a supervising janitor at Old City here for exemplary honesty.

Two weeks ago, Angelito Catulay found a bag containing P1,250 cash, a mobile phone and two "pan-to-mob" checks amounting to P444,376, in one of the mall floors.

Catulay immediately turned over the items to his superiors.

The mall management rewarded Catulay's deed by giving him a certificate of commendation, a cash prize and "spa and treatment" for two.

SM City Lucena also planned to make Catulay a regular employee. Catulay's picture has also been displayed in all bulletin boards in the mall. Emilio T. Mallari Jr., PNP Southern Luzon Bureau

INFOTECH

Sylvia Luz Magno

Globe Telecom makes first 3G call in RP

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

MOBILE operator Globe Telecom has made its first third-generation (3G) wireless call over a 3G trial network, the company said.

Globe claims to be the first Philippine operator to have tested 3G in the Philippines after obtaining a trial permit and frequencies from the National Telecommunications Commission.

"Telecommunications is a very dynamic and fast-paced industry," said Gerardo Ablaza Jr., Globe president and chief executive officer, after the 30-min

Globe was the first digital GSM network operator in the Philippines, when circa operations were still using analog networks about a decade ago.

It next jumped to 2.5G with General Packet Radio Service ahead of its rivals, according to Ablaza.

"Now, 3G is upon us, and we are ready. This video call is another milestone in the evolution of Globe, one of many steps Globe is taking to understand and build the next generation of telecommunications technologies and services," the CEO said.

3G promises a richer multimedia experience with the mobile phone. With 3G, applications such as mobile TV and live video calls can be made.

Ablaza said Globe Telecom continues to push new technologies and innovations.

"We are committed to investing today so these trials to make sure we will be ready when the time comes," he said.

Globe did not indicate when it would eventually launch a commercial 3G service.

TV coming soon to your mobile phone, says Nokia

By Erwin Oliva
Contributor

THE MOBILE phone industry is abuzz with the idea of watching your favorite sports show, movie, or MTV on your mobile phone, described as "mind-blowing."

The industry has yet to figure out what business models would work or what standards to adopt, but Nokia Philippines executives say mobile television will be the future of mobile information.

"It's not about replacing television sets. It is about bringing primetime television to people. It is described as mind-blowing," said Ahmed Marzijan, Nokia Philippines product manager in the software's business development unit.

Nokia is actively promoting the idea of mobile TV to different stakeholders in the local industry, including media firms and government regulators, according to Marzijan.

He indicated, however, that their business models have yet to emerge from this new technology. Some industry reports indicate that pay-per-use and subscription models have been considered.

"At the moment, we're open to different business models," Marzijan said.

Nokia is currently conducting pilot runs of the mobile TV application in Australia, United Kingdom, and other countries.

In the United Kingdom, mobile phone operator Orange launched its mobile television early this year, providing its subscribers with several channels that include ITN News, ESPN, Celebrity Love Island, and Sky Bowlers. O2 and Virgin Mobile have also announced trials of mobile television this year.

The mobile television service in the United Kingdom has recently raised regulatory issues like limiting related to television programs. No rules exist to govern mobile television in the Philippines as yet, says Deputy Commissioner Jorge Sarmiento of the National Telecommunications Commission.

"It is the all-time happening in the industry but we're unsure of this development. But we still don't have rules to govern this type of service," Sarmiento said in a telephone interview.

Nokia Philippines says its version of mobile phones to be launched in 2006 will support mobile television with the DVB-H standard.

Syndicates stealing ATM card info

By Ervin Lemuel Oliva
Contributor

A MODEM window camera disguised to look like a leaflet holder steals PIN codes and transmits the number to Chinese in a car waiting nearby.

THE SKIMMER is mounted on top of a normal ATM card slot and reads the card number.

THE LANDBANK of the Philippines has warned people against supposed criminal syndicates who were installing equipment on automated teller machines in order to steal personal financial information.

Such equipment can be used to steal both the ATM card number and the personal identification number (PIN) code of users, the Landbank said.

The sweeping equipment allows criminals to receive the information wirelessly as they wait nearby, it added.

Experts at the Landbank said the equipment used to capture the ATM card number and PIN codes is cleverly disguised to look like normal ATM equipment.

One piece of equipment, the skimmer, is mounted on top of a normal ATM card slot and reads the ATM card numbers. The skimmer transmits information from the ATM card to the criminals in a car parked nearby.

Another way to steal ATM card information is through a hidden wireless camera disguised to look like a leaflet holder. This hidden camera is usually mounted in a position where it can directly view the entry of ATM PIN codes, the Landbank said.

Once they get the information they need, criminal syndicates make copies of the cards and use the PIN numbers to withdraw cash from people whose card information had been stolen.

Officials at the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas were unavailable for comment.

Server blades (or blades) are widely viewed as compact and efficient servers that primarily save space and power. However, the full story behind blades goes far beyond considerations of the individual server. When making a deployment decision, blades should be considered as part of an integrated, consolidated infrastructure – or a complete system – that includes compute nodes, all virtualized and automated through a common management framework.

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GLOBE TELECOM
LANDBANK

There's life after Gloria and the tapes

Front page A1

cops administration, for not canvassing enough political will to implement reforms to root the deficit.

After a roundtable about the 'blueprint' of the Senators group is that it represents a fresh attempt to refocus national discourse from the sterile and sordid debate over the tapes that have provided dividends for the outpourings of Presidents Macapagal-Arroyo and over proposals calling for constitutional overhaul as way to end the current political crisis.

Above partisan fray

A shared theme the partisan fray over the tapes which have dominated the political debate during the past few weeks following their disclosure last month. It avoided references to the scandals rocking the Arroyo administration.

By doing so, the blueprint refocused national attention to the more fundamental issues that it considered more as the root of the decline of the Philippine state and the current crisis.

The fact that the blueprint was drafted by a group associated with the nationalist-left university as the UP—among those Senators, Sandy Daniel and Senators Constantino Jr., none of whom is a great fan of Ms. Arroyo—puts it above suspicion the initiative was intended to divert attention from the scandals implicating the Arroyo administration and threatening its survival.

Someone of all did the unexpected and unpredictable. Given their ideological perspective and their history of political activism, they would have been expected to get into the center of the "great divisive" constitutional revision and to put their intellectual weight behind any of the sides in the conflict that has deeply divided the nation.

Their academic detachment from the issues fueling the scandals allows them to entertain the agenda toward a state that offers some hope to the nation, away from the demoralizing state of politics and the debate that is feeding on a frenzy of misinformation and counter-disinformation.

The blueprint only makes indirect reference to the scandals. "Intensified corruption and cynicism are rampant both in the public and private sectors," the document says.

Diminishing credibility

"The credibility of our electoral process is fast diminishing because of massive vote buying and electoral fraud," it says. "Our country's future is declining in the ability of the present political leadership to lead the country out of the rut."

From that perspective, the blueprint seems as a much-needed relief from the poisonous atmosphere generated by the intensely partisan debate over the tapes and other perceived faults and shortcomings of the Arroyo administration.

It offers fresh perspectives through which solutions for the crisis may come. It seems to send the message that while it is true that the nation has now sunk into a deep crisis, and that the survival of the system requires tremendous trouble, there is life after Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the tapes, no matter what is the outcome of the impeachment proceedings against the President.

The blueprint describes the current situation, offering an alternative analysis of current problems, and outlines a set on say proaches to those problems.

"The best way to present the blueprint's diagnostic function is to contrast analysis and recommendations with those offered the present government and/or conventional frameworks," says the paper.

Highlights

The paper highlights the elements of a "vision in action," basing them in issues measured concern. These include:

+ The economy "is not growing fast enough to meet the needs of a rapid multiplying population," an issue that is being avoided by the Arroyo administration in the face of the Cabinet Dissent's opposition to population control programs.

+ The economy is "extremely vulnerable to external conditions because of its excessive dependence on earnings from overseas workers and on foreign loans and investments."

+ Political stability "remains elusive because of mass poverty and the exclusion of a large number of our people from meaningful participation in the nation's life."

+ "The future of our young people is bleak because of the deterioration in the quality of public and private education."

+ The government is increasingly unable to make ends meet, as indicated by chronic budget deficits. It is also increasingly unable to service the public debt without having to take out new loans.

+ Public infrastructure is deteriorating. The national environment is being degraded.

Contrasting view

Coming after the President's State of the Nation Address on July 25, the blueprint offers a contrasting view of the state of the nation. It reflects the focus to a fundamental regime of old programs, except for the call to fast-track constitutional revision. It contradicts the President's stress of a "strong republic."

The blueprint says that the establishment of a "strong Developmental State" is needed for its revitalization and implementation.

Contrasting it with the Arroyo mantra of a "strong Republic," the blueprint says that a strong Developmental State "is strong not in the sense of being authoritarian or arbitrary, but in the sense of having sufficient the endorsement of its laws and resolution in the pursuit of its programs."

The principal objective of such a state "is to toughen not barricades and narrow public confidence in them, free them from captivity by vested interests, and reinforce the rule of law in our society. Such a state, says the blueprint, aims to establish the conditions for sustained and equitable economic growth, so that private enterprise may flourish based in hand with, rather as the opposite of, eradication of the evil social injustices."

The blueprint "prioritizes the fulfillment of the people's recruitment basic needs, the restoration of just image as a touch of good times, the curbing of corruption at all levels."

The constitutional revision call stands high on the list of the blueprint's critique of the "conventional approaches." It says constitutional revision is being undertaken in a time of cynicism.

The alternative approaches of the blueprint will be examined in forthcoming essays.

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Makati Helplines prove burning the lines is good

By Tarra V. Quismundo

IN THE country's financial district, help is just a phone call away.

Makati City's four-year-old dial-five-help-hotline has lived up to its name yet again, as it registered an almost perfect rating in responding to complaints received in the first half of the year.

The Makati Information and Community Relations Department (MICRO) announced on Friday that the Makati Helplines, the city's central emergency calls and complaints reception center, rendered proper response to 98.7 percent of calls it received from January to June.

1,905 of 1,979

The 24-hour hotline solved 1,905 of 1,979 complaints called in within the six-month period, Makati Action Center (MAC) officer-in-charge Eduardo Calludo said in his report to City Hall last week.

The other 65 complaints, all outside City Hall's jurisdiction, were immediately forwarded to concerned agencies for proper response, the MICRO said in a statement. Referred calls included service-related complaints against private utility firms such as the Manila Electric Co., Maynilad Water Services Inc., and the Manila Water Co. Inc.

Among calls that can be placed to Makati Helplines are queries or reports on community concerns such as domestic violence and child abuse, drug abuse and trafficking, illegal gambling, gang wars and neighborhood quarrels, and power crises.

Callers may also relay information about uncollected garbage, burned water pipes, pocket Broadings, and open manholes. Emergency response teams may also be dispatched through the Helplines, in case of response for assistance in the event of earthquakes and fire incidents.

Some 30 MAC personnel manning three eight-hour shifts are on standby round-the-clock for emergencies, through the quick dial number 166, and the following telephone numbers: 896-8421, 890-3443, and 896-3441.

Gene Navarrete, Makati Helplines, established in 2001 to lighten the burdens City Hall and the community will be integrated with the city's Command Center, a new center of emergency response agencies, which include the police and fire departments, the Makati Rescue, the other city-run public service agencies.

The Command Center will bring together in a single all-seeing emergency response center all of the city's public service audio-visual communications facilities, including security cameras on major thoroughfares within the Central Business District, and radio and telecommunications systems of law enforcement and emergency assistance agencies.

Cops still scratching heads on Lanot case

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FORMER Pasig City Rep. Benjy Lanot was shot dead in front of dozens of witnesses and in broad daylight, but four months after the killing police have yet to move forward with the case.

"We still need to look for more evidence," Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Oscar Valenzuela said yesterday.

Valenzuela added, "Solving the case is difficult because the assassination was well-planned."

But he said they had interviewed almost a hundred witnesses about the assassination.

Yesterday, he said these were not enough to pinpoint the people behind the killing.

Lanot was eating lunch inside a Pasig City restaurant on April 13 when a gunman emerged from the toilet behind him, walked toward him and shot him in the head.

Lanot is a former representative of Pasig City before he ran for mayor but lost to Mayor Vicente Enrile last year.

Despite the apparent standstill in the case, Valenzuela said, "The investigation is going well. We already have leads."

But asked about the specifics in terms of the case, he said he would not discuss details so as not to jeopardize the investigation.

Lanot's own relatives are also in the dark about the progress of the case.

"We have been going to the authorities to monitor the investigation. They said they are still collecting more evidence," Lanot's uncle Jerry said.

Thieves run out of luck

TWO MEN and a woman were collared for shoplifting malfeasance in two separate snatching incidents at Gateway Mall and Robinson's Galleria, both in Quezon City Saturday afternoon.

Raul Cudaid, 43, and Rodrigo Cordes, 50, were apprehended by watchmen after reportedly grabbing the bag of Leilani Sampayan, 28, as she was having lunch at Burger on the second floor of Gateway Mall in Cubao.

Over at the Galleria, Susan Pineda, 35, was also nabbed by a watchman after reportedly snatching the bag of Josephine Romero, 51, who had just come from a grocery shopping shop.

The bag had P1,100 and 10,000 Won (P5,900). (RP Rep

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METRO
Edited by Ester G. Dizon-Apil

Text or your feedback to:

AUVs to launch 'bigger' strike today

By Clarissa S. Bautista

AUVs: On the spot

Stockton's master beatsare the will not overall shut circular. Enforcement no be pieces Action. We are hoping that the DOTC or Malacañang would intervene," said Magno.

The AUV Express circular took effect on Aug. 5.

AUV Express, a go

Stockton said the LTFRB will start running after "illegal" AUVs by Sept. 1 in line with the implementing Guidelines of the AUV Express order.

The agency she said, would start sending the enforcement fleet to those public utility vehicles qualified to have their franchises shift from a regular vehicle to one of an AUV Express.

Almost 9,000 PUVs in Metro can convert their franchises but only if these are not more than 12 years old, are not 10-bucks nor do they have jump seats. AUV operators who will convert the LTFRB concession fees should be top the future with them all soon.

The PSo, which have become convenient public transport for a lot of commuters, must carry their passengers from terminal to terminal. They are not allowed to pickup and drop passengers indiscriminately and must be painted in all colors, including their bumpers.

AUV operators have until the end of the year to have their franchises converted.

The process includes the completion of the conversion forms, payment of the P50,000 conversion fee ("is as much as four installments) and the compliance with the LTFRB order to paint the vehicle all colors.

Dec. 1 deadline

"We are originally thinking of giving them up to Dec. 1 as transition. But we are amend this until the end of the year so that starting January 2006, all qualified AUV Express type have completed the conversion process," said Stockton.

The LTFRB chief said that those not qualified to convert into an AUV Express would not be phased out. She said the government would have to clean up ways to installation other PUVs in farther into more useful public transport.

"We are not phasing out any franchise. The AUV Express order a means to allow the to co-exist legally with existing franchise holders like jeeps and buses," she said.

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Murder suspect takes a hostage, shot dead

By DJ Yap

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QC hopes to make traders of jobseekers

By DJ Yap

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SPORTS

Pascua, Butac top Ilocos race anew

LAOAG CITY—Reynaldo Pascua and Vilma Butac yesterday retained their respective Ilocos Region Elite Marathon crowns decisively unchallenged at the Rosa Storic Provincial Capitol building here.

Pascua completed the 21-km course to capture top honors over 200 seconds to claim his second straight title over Rosa Haro-runnerup Randy Basilio, who was second in 1:11:20, and Rafael Ching, who placed third in 1:14:40.

Butac, a graduating Education student at the Mariano Marcos State University, clocked 1:40:40 handily beating Florabella Hanon (1:51:44) and Hilarry Bunos (1:51:20).

The top three finishers in the men's and women's 21K race qualified for the National Finals set on Oct. 9 in Rizal, Manila.

Sun-scorched hills revealed the 420 marathon dead last year while the 20-year old Butac, a resident of Bacarra, Ilocos Norte, finished seventh.

Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) training director Michael Kiefer, also the lead organizer of the race, fired the gun that sent off the 6,000 runners in the event held in partnership with Governor Bob Manda Hotel, Adidas, Coca-Pacific, Inner-Tec, Department of Tourism, Nikki Mobile Prepaid and Powerbar.

Junico Cala (15:56) topped the men's 5K leg ran, followed by Rainier Dilag (16:10) and Noel Garcia (16:51). The women's race was ruled by Bella Ann Sagarino (24:08), Rebelle Ancog (25:20) and Christine Ingcoban (26:38).

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Untroubled voyage for Being There

By Edwin Villanueva, Correspondent

BOHOL: There found the going smoothly and even ran to sends her rivals yesterday in the fifth leg of the 2005 Imperial Stakes Series at the Santa Ana Park.

It could have been a repeat run over the seldom-figured 1,000-meter clymetic heat as jockey Jonathan Hernandez asked his mount for more juice as the Asian mare charged down the stretch.

Sensing the job was done after Being There built a six-length cushion at the top of the stretch, Hernandez took it easy as the commanding favorite, who eventually tied the harness race for the event.

Being There, a five-year old daughter of Haunted Human out of Endure Bubbles, stopped the clock at 1 minute 32.0 seconds (13.0-22.0-24.0-24.0), outshining Wild Orchid's three during the fourth leg.

"Alam ko siyang-siya na siguro ang laban. Di naman ako in the long for her so I found no need to urge her vigorously," said Hernandez after raiding down his third straight victory on board last year's Visayas Cup champion.

Being There bagged P555,000 after the unsung filly joined her top for the Chino Roces Presidents Cup on Aug. 21.

Hector Ingcoco's Last Stop and coupled her Manjot finished 2-3, while stablemates Fine Sandra and Dream Cross arrived fourth and fifth, respectively.

Being There handily drew away from Fine Sandra at the far turn over at Last Stop moved in to secure the battle for second spot.

No ticking bomb, says Mandaluyong mayor

BARE EYE

Jacob Trinidad

THE BULLETIN's Rick Gregorio, saying he has not been arrested off from Manny Pacquiao's training camp in California, Mexico, Oklahoma, full-length report yesterday. Her apologies to the competitors and bombarding with who we were told, ineffectively banned from the Pacquiao camp in Los Angeles.

Inducement weather has forced the heavens train to move its trip to Villarta, Bengaluru—to deliver collected donations to former national super Sonny Caballing, a hit-and-run victim—by noon Saturday. The outpouring of support has surpassed initial expectations.

What cannot wait is that urgent distribution from the Office of the Mayor of Mandaluyong City, Benjamin "Benjo" Abalos Jr., who has been behind the death of my kumpadre, Lorenzo Macalanda, 73, last month in this letter:

Dear Sir Trinidad,

I'm glad you sent to the Macalanda family. I have been looking to to the matter. But, as with most investigations, one has to deal with rare surrounding evidence—and there is the suggested and the other from the subject of the complaint—and I am a bit wary of issuing any final pronouncement in the absence of a careful study of the matter.

I am also concerned by word from the Mandaluyan to inform I and that, after their partner's burial, my office will facilitate a meeting between them and the Anti-Drug unit. However, if they would be inclined to file a case against our operatives prior to that meeting, I cannot see to stand in their way.

I hope you will come to hear from me what details I have, based on the report of the Anti-Drug unit.

The subterranean incident happened after the Anti-Vice unit went to Barangay Mabini-J. Rizal to look into the report of alleged illegal gambling in the area. The team headed by the officer and took the opportunity of conducting routine patrol operations. Along the way, they decided to pass by Sergeant and chanced upon a group of about four or five men inside a compound. On a hunch, the team headed by PO3 Ignacio Alonzo alighted and to, their surprise, the group scampered in all directions. They chased the men and one of the members of the unit passed through a gateway and noticed that Lloyd was in he was raising another alley. Since you said to have shouted for help, and the neighbors, including Mr. Lorenzo Macalanda, started doing it on them.

PO3 Alonzo was, by that time, confronting Dizon who was running away. Suddenly, a group men holding a shovel accosted PO3 Alonzo, shouting among others that they (the Anti-Vice unit) will not be able to arrest Dizon. PO3 Alonzo declared that, at this point, he placed his hand on his gun which was still holstered but did not draw the same. The late Lorenzo Macalanda reportedly shouted at the young boy and berated him for his behavior and it was at this time that he slumped on a chair clutching his chest. Among this, PO3 Alonzo maintained he was re-hearing Mr. Macalanda to the hospital, accompanied by a daughter and PO4 Eugenio.

After Mr. Macalanda was brought to the hospital, Barangay chairwoman Lily dela Cruz arrived at the scene and asked everyone to proceed to the barangay hall. There in her office, chairwoman dela Cruz, PO3 Alonzo and Dizon were in chambers when suddenly Mr. Elliot Macalanda barged in and punched PO3 Alonzo in the midsection that ensued. Dizon managed to escape amid the ensued that was gathered. Charges for direct assault by the two have been filed against Allan Macalanda.

The facts that I have also initially gathered are these: one, that Mr. Noel Dizon has already been arrested twice before this incident for the same offense. In all three occasions, the charges against him were dropped because the witnesses to the case were no longer willing to testify. Two, that the group were doing were legitimate, why did they have to scamper at the sight of the Anti-Vice unit?

The incident was a drama unto itself—the culprits caught in flagrante delicto, the innocent were not available, truth has not had the opportunity to coordinate with the barangay authorities. Surely, one cannot base the chance in a barangay hall or barangay to rush on instances. I promised PO3 Alonzo and his team on whether they indeed forcibly entered the house, "sprayed you in the kitchen" in search of evidence and then employed the shoving, after. Again, let me say this is just one side of the question and that the other would have to be ascertained later in the meeting which I offered to the Macalandas.

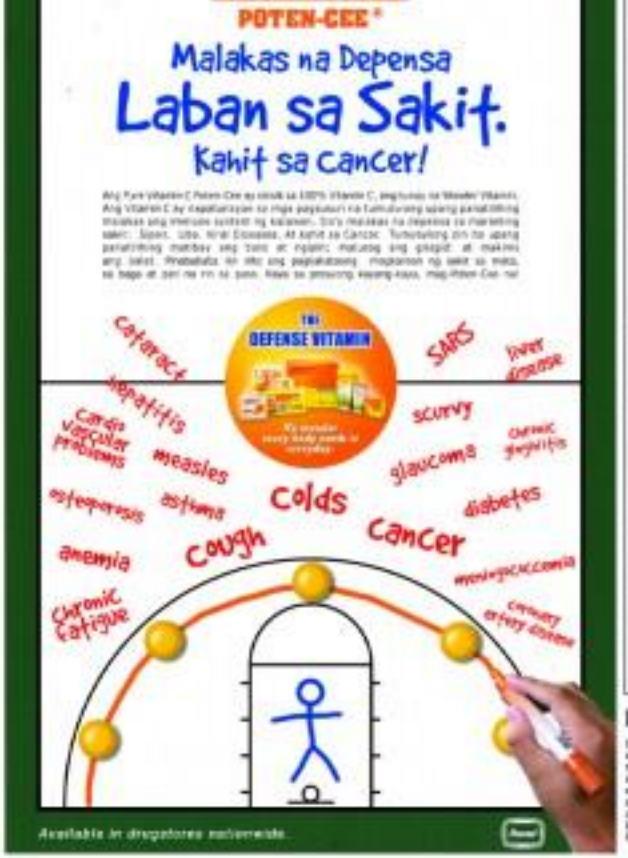
Please note that our next-line unit, along with other civilian law enforcement groups such as media, enforcement, have been principally created to complement the Philippine National Police which, for reasons such as manpower shortages, are unable to fully deal with Law enforcement matters in the city. Our city provides the resources needed by these civilian law enforcement units for the efficient and simple reason that the maintenance of peace and order is a responsibility we must serve to maintain it.

I would not and I am not condoning the actions of the men who take that will be found deserving punishment by the public. At this time, I am also not disregardful of any culpability as I will leave to finish a thorough investigation on the matter. Suffice it to say that I would like to reassure to you my united feelings on the matter, but the public be reassured that I am "reaping with a time bomb."

My commitment to holding our city of Mandaluyong safe, orderly, and drug abuse within the period entrusted to me as my mayor stays and will be pursued without letup. May I take this opportunity to point out that prior to your column being printed, one of the major gambling kingpins in the city, a certain Boy A, had been arrested by the men from our newly-reorganized previously trained team-units of arrest. He is now detained in the city jail. And mind you, these campaigns are the results of my commitment to public service, and not simply because "your kung mangaaliso U want to throw out." I do not discharge this function and responsibilities of my office for them, or for just trying to score brownie points to my pet points in the limpet. Within the bounds of the law, I will fulfilling duties no matter who gets caught.

Very truly yours,

HERNILO M. RAMALLOSE



Lyceum, St. Scho score in WNCAA

DEGEM of the Philippines opened its solo-extension ball yesterday in the WNCAA seniors basketball tournament with a 63-42 win over newcomers AMA Computer University, while St. Scholastica's college dumb Jewel Bonifer Spelmeyer (20 hgts-Manila in second straight finals) 63-58, at the MAC gym.

St. Scho Mercedes notched its first win as MAC slumped to a 9-2 card.

Centro Escolar University spoiled the debut of another two members, World Can Colleges, with a 93-59 rout.

In junior play, defending champion De La Salle-Zobel frustrated St. Scho, 64-46, while JCU pounded San Beda-Alabang, 86-8.

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SPORTS

TOPTWO: Anthony Washington (right) and Alex Cabagnot of DLS.

Virtually no surprises in PBA Rookie Draft

No.1 choice Washington plus Cardona, Canaleta go to Air21

By Jane Meneses

Air21 made the biggest catch—as expected—in the annual Philippine Basketball Association Rookie Draft yesterday, picking up three blue-chip players led by this year's No. 1 overall choice Anthony Washington.

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Rookie stars as UE Warriors stop Tamaraws

By Jasmine W. Payo

IT took a valiant and brilliant performance from the University of the East Warriors to finally tame the fire-breathing Tamaraws.

Freshman forward Rodney Custodio batted a triple with 26.3 ticks left and the Warriors dipped past the Tamaraws, 82-80, yesterday at the UAAP basketball tournament at the Araneta Coliseum.

"Our game plan was to just keep it close," said Warriors coach Edgar Pinlac. "We won the game because of our defense."

It was also Custodio who sealed the victory by sinking his free throws with 4.5 seconds to go.

The Tamaraws trounced on top at 7-1, while the Warriors kept second spot at 6-2.

Last season, it was also the Warriors who halted the dream Eagles 7-5 run.

Earlier, the University of the Visayas Spirits regained statistical mention for a 92-89 victory over the University of the Philippines Maroons.

Custodio, who cooperated with 19 points, nailed the triple for UE after Arnold Santos' putback gave the Isuns a 77-77 tie in the final minutes.

In junior play, the Baby Tamaraws trounced La Salle 71-61 after topping the Pupils, 77-50, while the Junior Maroons (1-3 intermediate Cubs, 79-52.

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BAP urged to show nationalism

CLEAN LIVING

Manuel R. Migo

IT IS HIGHLY refreshing to know that, in the interest of the country, some of our longtime basketball leaders have asked the crippled Basketball Association of the Philippines to step in imminently defiance of the Philippine Olympic Committee and support limited the new Philippine Basketball Federation, a rogue body backed by the POC.

In a recent article by the PBA's Manong Castillo, former basketball official and now Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas urged the BAP to "stop fighting a lost cause" and "rally behind the new regime under it's reasons to chose national identity." Gullas also asked the BAP to accept its expulsion from the POC and to give the PBL all the reasons to perform to clear as the new governing body for Philippine basketball."

Gullas, who was BAP official for the Siasons during the administration of two-time PBA president Emmide "Lito" Pupa, was hugged to hand the PBL has be hugged off at the last minute, citing old ego and his work in Congress. In his place, Manolo "Monday" Montellon, longtime secretary general of the senior Basketball Confederation (ABC), was unanimously elected president.

The PBF was admitted by the POC as the newest legitimate national sports association (NSA) last July 27 after the BAP was expelled from the POC by an overwhelming majority in the general assembly for creeping out an agreement (with the POC) on the formation of a strong and well-intentioned national team.

The POC was very concerned with the recent embarrassing performances of BAP-supported national teams in food and lifestyle tournaments, so much so that many asked for drastic reforms in the BAP that was then headed by Tito Limtal (the BAP is now headed by former Sen. Jinty Lisud, secretary general Graham Lim, who is facing deportation, and team coach Bayani Gamo).

"It was an unexpected reaction," said a basketball diehard on the call to revamp the BAP.

While I feel that the expulsion of the 70-year-old BAP was harsh, this corner shares the observation of many that the POC could not be faulted for its decision. The BAP and only blame itself, its continued defiance of the POC, the highest sports authority in the Philippines, has forced the POC to wield the axe and decide that enough is enough.

In a result, Filo banished the Philippines from international basketball tournaments, including the coming Southeast Asian Games where the Filipino rogers are the defending champions. Filo said it would also investigate the grounds for which BAP was expelled.

Montellon went to Hong Kong recently to personally hand documents — which led to the organization of the PBF — to Filo president Carl Ching Meng Ky. He was accompanied by POC media liaison chief Jose Humanes and Go Teng Kok, special assistant to POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco.

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NCA, PCAP stag derbies slated at Makati Coliseum

THE PHILTOWN National Cadets Association (NCA) and the Pinoy Cadets Association of the Philippines (PCAP) will stage big stag derbies at the Makati Coliseum starting next month. The NCA, headed by Sen. Ki Wanes, has lined up 7 stag derbies on Sept. 8 and 9, Sept. 22 and 23, Oct. 6 and 7, Oct. 13 and 20, Oct. 20 and 21, Nov. 3 and 10 and on Dec. 31, 17 and 18, the Grand National K-Stag Derby. Most stag derbies will be hosted by PEMP every Monday, beginning Sept. 5. Other schedules are Sept. 12, 19 and 26, Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 28. Meanwhile, the annual Ni Hanes 3 Stag/Derby kicks off at the same venue on Aug. 28 and 29 with Roland Simon as host.

Virtually no surprises in rookie draft

A 6-foot-5 forward out of Eduard College in the US NCAA (Senior 1), the '04 B-Washington was the fourth-choice choice of the Eagles even before the rookie selection process started at the Sta. Lucas Sand Sand Multi-Center, Manila.

"I was totally surprised at Phil and that it's final by now," said Talahagaon, 22, who recently led Pelicans Rams to a championship crown in the Philippine Basketball League.

"I heard they (Express) were considering me as the top pick, but it never really sank in until my name was called."

The Express also grabbed BAAP and PBL Most Valuable Player Mac Cardona of La Salle. With overall and made the slam-dunking Mac Cardona of University of the East the sixth pick.

Sta. Lucas finally used its No. 2 overall pick on Jay Colegrove, a 6-foot-11 guard from University of Hawaii-Hilo in the US NCAA Division II, while Gina Gilo, armed with the third overall choice, snagged Dennis Miranda.

"Back in the States, I play the point," said Colegrove, who impressed coaches with his dribbling and shooting abilities. "But I will play whatever position my coach wants me to play."

Miranda, a 6-foot playmaker from the Eastern University, played for the national team in the Jones Cup, his impressive stint making him a two-day backup for sure guard Johnny Abarrientos.

"I'm speechless. Almost unbelievable to me (to) since I began picking up the sport," said the 22-year-old Miranda.

Patchook selected 6-foot-1 Jondan Salvador as the fourth overall choice.

"If there's one team in the PBA I would love to play with, it's none other than Purefoods," said Sr. Jondan's Salvador a PBL MVP.

Ningnan Michael Bolper, who played for the Philippines in the SEG, went to Barangay Ginebra (seventh), while San Miguel threw surprisingly behind (8th) Bong Ronda (Ateneo, star of Hall of Famer Perdido Valladolid of Cimpa fame).

Red Bull wrapped up the first round by grabbing FEM MVP Leo Najorda of San Sebastian.

In the second round, Sta. Lucas picked FEU's Gene Conti, Cerra Cola selected Ped Ramona from University of the Visayas, Air 21 Rookie Al Dhaquan, Purefoods got La Salle's Al Manalo and Red Bull snatched Ateneo's Larry Fonacier.

Alaska grabbed 6-foot-7 Mark Bong Sta. Lucas got 6'0's Boy Mendoza and Red Bull picked 6'4 Rocky Rogelio of Mapua. Talk 'N Text, pitching last, chose Mark Macapagal of San Sebastian.

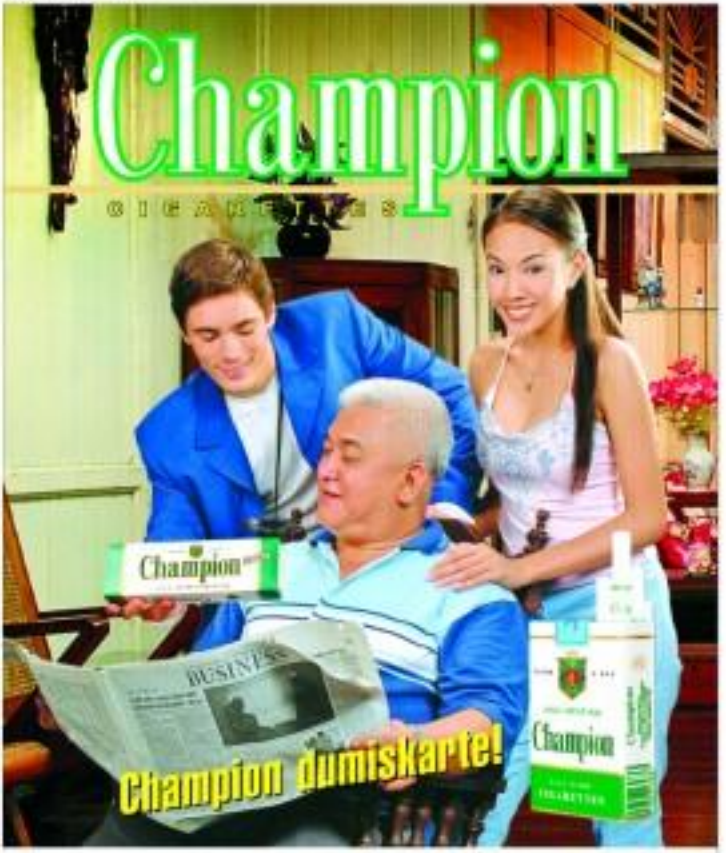
A total of 38 players were selected, making the rest of the 49 undrafted players free agents. The 38 rookies will have to sign a contract with their drafter (officials) within seven working days. Otherwise, they will become restricted free agents.

"With the rookies we picked plus the other players in the team, we will now have a surplus of players in the wings and in the slot," said Red Bull president and Express manager Leo Alvarez.

The Express already have Reuben Mendiz, Gary David, Arnold Tolibil and Wesley Gonzales in the wings while Mon Fernandez and Arnold Tan (trumpet duplicate the roles of Washington and Canadien.

Red Bull coach Ric Penaid said at least five of the 38 Express players will be unloaded.

Penaid said three teams have dangled temptating offers to acquire Washington, but the former UP Maroons standout stressed that the top pick for the Express' need list of big man.



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BRAIN

OFW remittances surged 32% in June

Brings 6-month inflows to $4.9B

By Doris C. Dumlao

REMITTANCES from the country's migrant workers surged by 32.1 percent in June to $935 million from a year ago due to the higher deployment of skilled workers and improved access to banking channels, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the sustained double-digit growth in overseas Filipino workers' (OFW) remittances had brought the first-semester inflows to $4.9 billion, which was 21.1 percent higher than the year-ago level of $4 billion.

Bulk of the fund transfers came from the United States, Saudi Arabia, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.

Citing data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Tetangco said the total number of deployed Filipino workers for the first semester rose by 6.4 percent to 537,375.

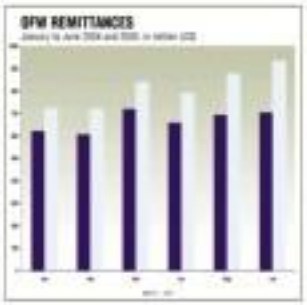
Land-based workers increased by 6.3 percent to 482,333 from a year ago while deployed sea-based workers rose by 9.2 percent to 55,241.

"The demand for both land- and sea-based Filipino workers has consistently grown on account of the value-enhancing training provided to local workers prior to deployment (and) a multi-lingual proficiency, value-system (schooling), literacy) to develop and hone their capabilities as well as hone their competitiveness and marketability," Tetangco said.

The top destinations of OFWs were Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, the United Arab Emirates and Japan.

It also helped that higher paid and professional workers were being deployed, Tetangco said.

(TURN TO B2)



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The underground economy and Jueteng

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

BETS THE government of the illegal numbers game jueteng in the news these past weeks. It has emerged that just a negligible portion of our population actually derives employment and livelihood from the activity. It is a dubious industry where over-all billions of pesos are estimated to change hands in any given year, but because the bulk of the business comes from the hard-earned savings of the lower income groups, it is often pointed out to be jaded that there is at last wealth among the poor. The thrill, long has always been how to channel this wealth into more beneficial pursuits that do not involve collateral damage on our people's values, ethics and morality.

Informal vs. underground

Jueteng is just one among many kinds of underground economic activities that are presumed to be excluded from the economic statistics regularly reported by government. Economists use the more technical term "informal sector" to refer to those types of economic activities that do not pay taxes, do not submit regular reports to the government, and even routinely violate contracts or laws in doing business like the unions suppress, prohibition on child labor, safety and sanitary standards, and so on. Even friendly neighborhood sarisaring or fishball vendor is part of it just as much as the drug syndicate, prostitution and big crime smuggling ring. When we hear the term "underground" economy, it's this latter we usually think of. But a big part of the informal sector is not necessarily into patently illegal activities. They just operate really outside of the statistics, so they may not even be keeping any formal records or books. That is, not all informal sector activities are normally "underground" activities in the sense of being illegal, the latter is only a subset of the former.

Every economy, whether developed or developing, has a significant informal sector. In the Philippines, the informal sector is estimated to account for around 30 percent of total employment. Of course, this is only a rough estimate, since by definition, the informal sector is not fully captured in official statistics. Nevertheless, it is a significant part of the economy that we cannot ignore.

How we measure it

How do we measure the size of our informal sector? Our two statistics mavens, Stella Quiko of the National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) and Bobbit Bruna of the National Statistics Office (NSO) explain to me the approach as follows:

The NSO's annual Survey of Establishments (ASE) yields a measure of total employment in the "organized" production sector, and she makes it possible to calculate average output per worker broken down into the major sectors of the economy. Meanwhile, the quarterly Labor Force Statistics (LFS) from NSO and the two-yearly Labor and Employment Statistics (LES) – which is based on household interviews – provides data on total employment, whether in the organized (formal) or unorganized (informal) sectors. The difference between

MetroPac keen on bidding for Napocor assets

As it diversifies into infrastructure business

By Clarissa S. Rodino

PHILSTAR/JOHN

METRO Pacific Corp., a subsidiary of Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., is seriously looking at the transmission and generating assets of National Power Corp. in line with the company's strategy to diversify into infrastructure development.

Metro Pacific chair Manuel Pangilinan said the company was still evaluating whether it would make a bid for the transmission assets, also called the National Transmission Corp., or Napocor's power plants.

Investors are not allowed to bid for both the transmission assets and power plants as specified by the law. They have to choose between buying the power-generating plants and eying for the long-term management of the network of high-voltage lines now owned by Napocor.

Metro Pacific, he said, would likely separate a consortium with other groups because power projects required huge investments.

Metro Pacific president Jose Ma. de Lim said the company was looking at "specific opportunities in the energy mining and infrastructure sectors."

Line said progress had been made in the area of toll road.

Pangilinan said the problem with investing in the power sector was the uncertainty on the government's privatization plans.

"They have not said until now when the bidding for these Napocor assets take place would be held," he said.

Debt-and-Gen Napocor must sell more than 30 power plants and the management of the $19 billion transmission assets to pay off obligations, a key measure in bringing down power rates. The cost of electricity in the Philippines is the sixth highest in Asia.

The government started selling power generating assets in March 2004. It had sold six of 10 so far, with proceeds amounting to $344.95 million or P19.39 billion.

"Power is a big sector. We are talking with other parties for potential partnership because it will require a big investment," he said.

Four groups reportedly lined to negotiate last year with Transco for the management of its assets. These companies submitted an offer of $1.9 billion, $2.3 billion, $2.6 billion and $3.4 billion, but the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. changed its mind and decided to privatize these assets through a bidding.

On July 29, Technology of Thailand, the second biggest listed firm, is in talks with three to four Filipino firms to make a bid for the high-voltage business of Napocor, according to the Philippine representative denied a campaign.

Line said its Filipino partners offered the government $3.6 billion last October for the long-term management of the transmission business.

Aside from Epal, those believed to have made an offer for the transmission assets were the the group of Japan's Tokyo Electric Corp., $3B listed Trans-Electric and Itoi Miguel Corp. with Morgan Stanley, Yon Fu-chi Co. Ltd. and Union Steel of Australia and Sydney Ports and ING Canada.

Landco ties up with Escuderos to develop 400-ha Laguna property

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LANDCO Pacific Corp., a subsidiary of Metro Pacific Corp., is teaming up with the Escuderos family for the development of the latter's sprawling 400-hectare property in Villa Nacidera in San Pedro City, Laguna.

"What we plan to do is develop the 400-hectare property into a mixed-use tourism project and we are planning to call it Hacienda Escudero," Landco president and chief executive officer Alfred Ang Ben-gonzon Jr.

Ben-gonzon said this would likely involve the development of residential areas, retirement village and other tourism-related projects.

Landco signed an agreement with Villa Escudero Corp. to develop 400 hectares of the 500-hectare Escudero property in Laguna into a mixed-use tourism project.

Phase One of Hacienda Escudero involving the first 50 hectares will be launched this year. This phase, alone, was estimated to cost about P500 million.

Powered by increasing profit, Landco is also forging a joint venture with landowners for the development of a 93-hectare property in Calatagan, Batangas this year. The property will be transformed into an integrated residential and tourism center.

A first of its kind to be owned by Landco and the development would feature exclusive seaside home lots, a hotel, commercial center with retail, dining and entertainment outlets, apartment and condominium buildings, and recreational attractions that would be designed to draw Metro Manila tourists to Calatagan.

Landco envisions to transform Calatagan into a major tourist town offering varied nature-based attractions and activities. Only two and a half hours away from southern Manila, Calatagan is a viable destination for local and foreign tourists because of its reasonable cost in the area and its proximity to Metro Manila.

Calatagan already boasts of white sand beaches, historical landmarks, a world-class championship golf course and eco-tourism sites. Landco proposes to complement these existing attractions with a tourist hub integrating residential and tourism projects that will serve as a base from which to explore Calatagan's various attractions. A coral regeneration program will also be undertaken by Landco to position the resort as a diving spot.

These tourism ventures have been pushed by Landco's experience in leisure and recreation gained from its earlier pioneering concepts Peninsula and Privilege de Punta Fuego, Leisure Farms and Residencias Latinas Punta.

Landco aims to double its revenue to P4 billion by 2007 and emerge as one of the country's top developers.

The company is investing aside P1 billion in capital expenditures this year.

MANUFACTURING, SERVICES UP

Jan.-June investments hit P125.7B

By Bonna W. Domingo

INVESTMENTS approved by the Board of Investments and the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in the first half of the year amounted to P125.71 billion, involving 268 projects, the Department of Trade and Industry said.

The amount was 12 percent lower than the P142.83 billion registered in the first six months of 2000. Last year's investment registration performance was boosted by GNPower Ltd.'s P98.53-billion power complex.

Trade Secretary Mar S. Roxas stressed that in the first half of the year, investments in the manufacturing and services sector went up 140 percent to P71.27 billion, from P19.5 billion in the same period last year.

For the periods compared, projects related to manufacturing and service made up 57 percent of total approvals this year as against last year's 21 percent.

The committed investments in the manufacturing sector are distributed as follows: 96 percent for color wood), refined petroleum and other fuel products; 27 percent for chemicals and chemical products; 7 percent each by radio, television and communication equipment and apparatus and manufacturing of non-electronic components; and 13 percent for other manufactured products.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said the manufacturing and service sectors would generate 43,371 new jobs once these projects were fully operational. The remainder 90 percent of the 43,366 direct jobs to be created by all the 246 projects.

Hernandez, who is also BOI managing head, said local investors continued to be the major source of new capital in the first half, with committed investments of P82.98 billion. Foreign investors accounted for P42.78 billion.

He said Japanese investors topped the foreign investments list with P37.34 billion, while the Koreans, Dutch and Americans had P9.72 billion, P7.04 billion and P5.06 billion, respectively.

Some P68.79 billion in investment commitment, or about 48 percent of the total, would be infused into Southern Tagalog or the Calabarzon area.

More than half of the amount is for Al Ascenti's logistics center project to be set up in Batangas and Toyota Motor Philippines' vehicle manufacturing and assembly project in Laguna.

To date, a total of P17.55 billion worth of projects have been committed. This was 168 percent higher than the P3.71 billion listed in the same month last year.

GMA 7 1st half profit up 39% to P1.04B

By Clarissa S. Batino

GMA Network Inc. has registered a net profit of P1.044 billion in the first six months, up 39 percent from P751 million in the same period last year, on the sustained strength of its ad revenue sales and a well-managed spending.

GMA president Felipe Gozon said total ad revenue was also 39 percent higher in the first semester than year-ago level, while expenditures grew at a slower pace of 10 percent.

Gozon said the company was optimistic it could meet or even surpass its P2 billion profit target for the year. Last year, the company posted a net profit of P1.5 billion.

"I think we will exceed P2 billion (in profit) this year because the first half is usually weak, or thin the second half," Gozon said in an interview.

The country's most profitable network in Mega Manila kept its lead over rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. in terms of earnings and ratings.

GMA 7 is planning to offer to the public 15-20 percent of its shares in the first quarter next year.

GMA hosted ABS-CBN by more than 12,000 minutes of airtime only from January to June, for the whole of 2000. Channel 7 aired more than 10,000 minutes of ads.

ABS-CBN earlier reported a net income of P165 million in the first half, down 67 percent from year-ago level. Its ruling share in Mega Manila is 36 percent against GMA-7's 39 percent.

ABS-CBN, however, said that its ratings share had started to recover from the low of 27 percent in April. The target network is confident that by next year it would regain its lead over GMA, which an ABS-CBN official said, was "nowhere in sight outside of Mega Manila."

LandBank, DBP to be tapped for Al-Amanah rehab

By Doris C. Dundas

THE GOVERNMENT will tap state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines to help rehabilitate the country's only Islamic bank, Al-Amanah, prior to its privatization.

Finance Undersecretary Jay Singson said the government was now mapping out ways to revitalize the Al-Amanah Islamic Bank of the Philippines although it was not keen on any fresh cash infusions.

He estimated that the Islamic bank, which the government had been trying to privatize since 2000, was saddled with P480 million to P500 million worth of liabilities.

Based on Al-Amanah Bank's published statement of financial conditions as of March 29 this year, its total assets stood at only P87.11 million as against liabilities of P592.8 million.

The bank is currently undercapitalized by P415.7 million and has a negative ratio to equity of almost 12 percent.

An Islamic bank is very much different from a conventional bank as it does not charge interest or grant pre-determined fixed returns for the use of money. The Islamic bank earns through profit sharing as it invests its funds instead of lending out.

Under this principle, an entrepreneur does not have to worry about fluctuating interest rates or foreclosure of mortgaged assets as the bank shares in the risks involved in any deal it enters into.

In view of tough competition in the banking arena, Al-Amanah Bank has been unable to attract deposits that could finance its operations.

As of the first quarter, the Islamic bank had a deposit base of only P420 million, of which P300 million consisted of government placements.

Also, its non-performing loan ratio of 90 percent is the highest among commercial banks. Its NPLs amounted to P7.5 million as of the first quarter while "classified loans" and other "risk assets" amounted to P72.6 million.

Banks' NPL ratio down to 9.2%

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOR THE first time in seven years, the bad loan ratio of Philippine commercial banks fell to a single-digit level, as a substantial portion of their bad assets were unloaded using the special purpose vehicle (SPV) framework.

A Samples Amotal ng Pilipinas report showed that as of end-June, the banking sector's non-performing loan ratio was down to 9.21 percent. The level peaked at 16.81 percent in October 2001.

The June NPL ratio improved significantly from the 11.04 percent posted in end-May and 13.77 percent in end-June last year.

In a press briefing Friday, BSP Governor Rafaelita Aquino Jr. said the NPL report had already factored in some P55 billion worth of restored loans cleaned up under the SPV framework in the past few months.

"The reduction in loan quality deteriorated due to the (Asian) regional crisis in mid-1997," Aquino said.

"The main significant reductions started in the latter part of 2000 as bulk sales of bad assets to SPVs were made," he said.

The SPV Law mandated some of the taxes and reduced fees imposed on the sale or transfer of assets. It waived the documentary stamp tax, capital gains tax and VAT (expanded value added tax) and reduced the registration transfer fees by 50 percent.

In June, alone, NPLs sold through SPV deals amounted to P12.3 billion, trimming the sector's total bad loans to P115.87 billion from P299.05 billion a year ago.

Aquino said the banks' efforts to improve collections and restructure loans had also significantly contributed to the reduction in the NPL level.

Of the banking sector's total loan portfolio of about P1.9 trillion, P115.19 billion or about 6 percent was restructured. Of this, some 41.05 percent was even performing.

The banks' real and other properties and acquired (repossessed) assets as of June amounted to P197.22 billion, lower than the P207.3 billion a year ago.

The ratio of regular and NPLs brought the sector's total non-performing assets (NPAs) to P360.3 billion or 8.99 percent of gross assets, down from from 12.29 percent ratio a year ago.

The NPA coverage ratio—referring to the amount of bad assets for which banks had set aside reserves—improved to 59.89 percent as of end-June from 50.50 percent a year ago.

Loan loss reserves earmarked by banks during the period amounted to P126.38 billion while NPA reserves were reported at P146.26 billion.

A PAMI worker at one of the country's mining sites. A total of 65 MPSAs were canceled by the government recently.

DENR suspends issuance of mining permits

By Christine A. Esplosa

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources has temporarily stopped issuing mining permits called Mineral Production Sharing Agreements (MPSAs).

To pave the way for the full monitoring and assessment of the development of current mining projects, Environment Secretary Michael T. Defensor last week issued Memorandum Order No. 11 declaring a moratorium on the issuance of MPSAs.

The DENR's mines and geosciences bureau said it was directed to issue only exploration permits and not MPSAs.

In the same order, the DENR also cancelled 65 non-performing MPSAs. Holders of these MPSAs, according to the DENR, have not been undertaking any mining activity for nine to 25 years.

"Contractors or MPSA holders would have to prove that there are significant reserves in their areas to obtain MPSAs," said the bureau's assistant division chief Leo Jasmines in an interview.

The DENR decided to cancel the 65 MPSAs after the holders of which failed to file their renewal for reconsideration during the prescribed period.

Jasmines said the DENR wanted to conduct an inventory of all approved and pending mining permits in line with its effort to maximize the potential of the country's mineral resources.

Among the 65 MPSAs canceled were those of Jumpilite III, Cipanganan in Tupsi, Benguet; Tranquilino Llaneres, Region 1; VR Romero Construction Inc., Region 2; Hermano Ramos and Amor Anne Ramos, Region 3; 4883 Mining Corp. and Bonifacio, Region 4-A; Tagbilaran Mini Industries Corp., Aldilla Mallari, Balibagan Mining Exploration Corp., Corvelio Bonilla and Magdiwang Enterprises Co., Region 4-B; and the heirs of Vicente Ramirez, Gamao Mining Co. Inc. and Cam Mina Mines, in Inc. and the heirs of Epifanio Lambebe, Region 5.

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Spurred by PNB sale, gov't seen to go on vending spree

By Dexter L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT will pursue a more aggressive privatization program on the heels of the "successful" sale of its stake in Philippine National Bank, a Finance Department official said.

Specifically, the Privatization Management Office will focus its efforts on selling the old International School compound in Makati City, and another property owned by the National Development Co. before yearend.

"The sale of PNB is a big boost to the privatization program," Finance Undersecretary Gabriel Singson Jr. said in a telephone interview. "It sends a strong signal that the government is serious in its effort to sell off these assets."

Singson—who is in charge of the finance department's privatization program—said he expects to earn up to P2 billion or more by yearend if the sale of the International School and NDC properties are successful.

Officials want to turn the property of the former International School into an information technology hub.

The finance department is now trying to get the Makati City government to approve a change in the zonal classification of the compound to "commercial" from "institutional."

"We want to market [it] as an IT center," Singson said. "A change in the zoning will allow a [property] developer to build on it and make it commercially viable."

Both the International School and NDC properties will be put on the auction block within the next three months, he added, especially since the local property market is starting to recover.

A successful sale will increase the government's privatization proceeds this year to P4 billion. The proceeds this year will be used to help plug an expected P140-billion budget shortfall.

For next year, Singson said he plans to privatize the old airport in Iloilo City, especially since flight operations are transferred to the new airport currently under construction.

More importantly, the government early next year will also try to sell its stake in the Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC).

Singson declined to reveal details of the proposed transaction but hinted that it will be "similar in magnitude to PNB," referring to the massive privatization of the oil refinery in the mid-1990s.

"We will follow the PNB sale model and offer 60 percent to a strategic investor while selling 20 percent to the public," he said.

The government has listed down about 40 other real estate items up for sale, including the Food Terminal Inc. complex in Taguig. It also hopes to earn as much as P9 billion from the sale of its Meralco shares. But the continued rise of the PSE Inc. Aktan Financial press and the subsequent stock market crash, have cut Meralco's share price such that the government now expects only P4 billion in proceeds from its sale.

Apart from Meralco, the other big-ticket items on the privatization list are government's 30-percent stake in the Malampaya natural gas project, the Philippine Hotel Corp. (PhilHotel), the Philippine National Construction Corp., and its stake in Eastern Telecommunications Philippines Inc.

After lowering trade figures, RP growth rate may be next

By Michelle V. Rivera

THE PHILIPPINES' economic growth of 6.1 percent in 2004—which the government had proudly reported to be the highest in 15 years—may be lowered.

The National Statistical Coordination Board (NSCB) and concerned government agencies have already begun a review of the country's macroeconomic figures, including the 2004 GDP (gross domestic product) and GNP (gross national product), following the announcement that the Philippines' balance of trade last year was overstated by a significant margin.

The National Statistics Office earlier reported that the 2004 trade deficit was actually $4.36 billion, not $71.3 million as earlier reported. The difference—a huge $15.16 billion—was apparently due to the adoption of a new method in calculating trade figures. The government now needs to acclimatize itself with the new technology in gathering exports and imports data from traders.

The revision covered changes in the trade figures of the electronics sector.

Dennis Arroyo, director of Neda's policy and planning staff, said economic growth figures for 2004 would likely be affected by the revision of the trade deficit figure, and it could be lower than earlier announced.

But Arroyo said that should there be a revision of the GDP and the GNP figures, it would be "very minimal." He explained that trade deficits (or surpluses) have only a small impact on the economic growth figures. In the Philippines, actual gross economic growth is consumption, he explained.

"Imports of goods is [equivalent to] 40 percent of GNP, [while] imports is 41 percent," Arroyo said. "It [imports] minus M [imports] is only one percent compared with the 60 percent contributed by consumption."

Arroyo said the Neda has yet to come up with an estimate of how much the GDP and GNP would be revised. But he agreed when asked that a GDP change in the high 5 percent level would be unlikely.

The NSCB said GDP growth for 2004 was expected to be at a similar 6.1 percent. GDP is the total value of goods and services produced by a nation, while GNP includes net factor income from abroad, such as remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

DOF nixes plea to lift cap on input VAT

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has decided to turn down the business sector's plea of lifting all rules putting a cap on the unpaid VAT credits that companies can claim.

According to finance officials, the restrictions are essential in putting a stop to widespread abuses of the tax credit system.

The DOF department thumbed down the proposal of removing the provision in the expanded value-added tax (VAT) law that requires companies to spread over a five-year period the input VAT credits they gained from purchases of capital equipment worth over P1 million.

The finance department also did not approve the proposal for government to do away with the 3 percent final withholding VAT imposed on firms that deliver goods or services to government offices.

A 3 percent final withholding VAT requires government entities that purchase goods or services from a supplier to withhold 3 percent of the 12 percent VAT imposed on the supplier. In effect, the rule ensures that the companies pay a net VAT of 9 percent, irrespective of the amount of their input VAT credits.

The spreading of input VAT credits over a five-year period and the 3 percent final withholding VAT are two of the three provisions in the VAT law that are said to restrict the claim of credits.

"We have already decided against the proposals to protect government revenue chains," said Finance Assistant Secretary Gil Beltran in an interview. The finance official was referring to taxpayers who claim excessive input VAT credits to reduce their VAT liabilities.

"An ideal VAT system does not require restrictions in the claim of input VAT credits," Beltran said. "But we cannot implement an ideal VAT system in the Philippines because many taxpayers are dishonest."

The DOF earlier said it would study proposals from the private sector to relax all three provisions in the VAT law that restrict the ability of companies to claim their input VAT credits.

Members of the business community, especially petroleum dealers, have complained that putting a cap on the input VAT credits would dampen the profitability of their businesses.

But Beltran said when the DOF sees new study upon to ease the proposed refunding the 70-percent VAT cap. The DOF is studying the impact of easing the VAT cap to 90 percent.

—Ma. Stella T. Rimas

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BIR gets tough on tax collectors, threatens dismissal

The new improved national ID

If it no longer called the national ID card, it is called the certified multi-purpose ID card.

Under Executive Order No. 420, which took effect last month, President Macapagal-Arroyo requires all government agencies and government-owned and controlled corporations to streamline and harmonize their identification systems.

Local government units may join the program at their option. The director general of the National Economic and Development Authority has issued the implementing rules.

I guess the program will eventually be expanded to cover the private sector. But, I estimate (the ace reader's half-in-the-sun) five years.

The EO is meant to: (1) reduce costs on the government and the public brought about by the use of multiple ID cards and the maintenance of databases containing the same related information; (2) ensure greater convenience for those transacting with the government; (3) facilitate private businesses and promote the wider use of the card; (4) enhance the integrity and reliability of government-issued ID cards; and, (5) facilitate access to, and delivery of, quality and effective government service.

As a result, the certified multi-purpose ID system is established. The system covers government employees only, but anybody can voluntarily sign up. A non-bureaucracy will soon be open to us.

The data required of an employee are: name, home address, sex, picture, signature, date and place of birth, marital status, height, weight, marks of two index fingers and thumb, any distinguishing feature, (ex short-/tsuntsurot-nose (TSN).

To ensure privacy, these data must be supplied by the employee and cannot be taken from any existing record. The data are to be kept strictly confidential. The employee must give prior and written authority to disclose any data.

This is a much better system than the one proposed by then President Ramos under his infamous administrative Order No. 308—struck down by the Supreme Court as an unwarranted invasion of privacy. In that system, the databases of government agencies were to be interlinked into one huge computer installed in the dark recesses of Malacañang or the defense department.

The latest biometrics technology will be used. The unique data of an employee, such as the thumb mark, will be encoded into the card. When the card owner wants to, say, make out a loan from GSIS, the card will be swiped into a scanner that verifies the applicant's identity. It will take a few years to provide 1,500,000 government employees with the card and install the scanners.

However, an employer who cannot show a unified multi-purpose ID will not be denied government service, although it might take many a time to provide the service.

While the ID and the implementing rules repeatedly warns against unauthorized invasion of privacy, there are no penalties prescribed for any violation of the rules. I wonder why.

Which brings me to the question: Is the unified multi-purpose ID card the government response really necessary? Just what kind of government service does a government desk need?

If he takes out a loan, or wants to buy a low-cost housing unit on installment, his ID card won't help if his dues are unpaid. If he gets sick, no government hospital will turn him away. When he retires, his record in GSIS will be the basis of his pension.

Finally, where will the government get the estimated P350,000,000, which the program will ultimately cost?

Why can't we get rid of the guessing-feeling that a well-connected entrepreneur has the lock on the contract to produce the cards and make millions and millions in profits?

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Romulo C. Gonorat

By Michelle V. Rivera

P75.2B2 is to pass revenue collection performance, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has threatened to fire those who will not meet their collection targets in the second half.

BIR Deputy Commissioner Jim Kimaru said that with the Fertilizer Monitoring System (FMS), the BIR intends to keep alive its hope of meeting the daunting P547 billion collection target for 2005, despite a poor showing in July.

Reinforced the FMS would initially assess revenue agents under the large taxpayers division. The department accounts for about 60 percent of the BIR's collection, covering companies belonging to the Top 10,000 firms.

Under the PMS, revenue agents will be assigned specific work objectives and rated. A rating of "2" will be assigned to those whose performances are considered "poor," and "1.0" for "excellent."

Those who will earn a grade of 2 in the first semester of the system's implementation shall be dismissed from service, she said.

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HSBC sees robust credit card growth

By Doris C. Dumlao

HSBC's bank HSBC sees its Philippine credit card business, now the fastest growing in the industry, doubling in about three years on the back of strong domestic consumer spending.

HSBC recently hit the 500,000 mark in credit card issuance since entering the business in 1997, making it the fourth biggest issuer in the country with a market share of about 11 percent.

"This milestone is relevant for HSBC because it underscores how fast we've been able to grow the business in the last three years," Hamid Cook, HSBC deputy chief executive officer and head of personal financial services, said in a briefing.

"The Philippines continues to be an underserved market," he said, noting that the potential credit card market was growing as fast as the middle class was expanding.

Citing the Bankers Credit Card Association of the Philippines' industry survey, HSBC posted the highest year-on-year market growth of 25.2 percent in the first semester or about three times faster than the industry average of only 7.9 percent.

The foreign bank, which is celebrating its 100th year in the country, also topped the highest number of new card issuances with 50,000 in the first six months of the year as well as the highest spending per card use in Visa brand.

Given this rate of growth, Cook said the bank could double the size of its business in five to six years.

But Cook said the bank was expanding its credit card business not only for the sake of growth as it would like to ensure as one of the best in terms of asset quality. He said the bank was also able to keep delinquency rates much lower than those of its peers.

Based on the latest Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data as of end-March, the ratio of the commercial banking sector's past due credit card receivables averaged at about 22 percent of total billings.

HSBC, like most foreign banks, caters to clients with a minimum monthly income of P50,000 or about P 600,000 a year.

The bank attributed the growth of its local card business to the streamlined launching and marketing activities over the last few years as well as the more integrated sales approach using an expanded branch network as a result of its acquisition of a mid-size bank now known as HSBC Savings Bank.

Other sales channels being used are direct sales, outbound call center services and e-channels.

"Consumers have become more cognizant of value over the years. They have matured in their choices and will prefer credit cards that offer them tangible benefits," Cook said.

"Our acquisition strategy has been to extend offers to all card customers and not resort to the raffle approach which only benefits a few," he said.

HSBC country general Visa and MasterCard classic and Gold variants. In 2005, it launched the first credit card for women, the RED Mastercard, which has since become one of its most popular cards.

The bank also entered into a referral arrangement with Philippine Airlines to market its Mabuhay Miles Visa, which earns cardholders points that may be redeemed for free local and international flights.

Among HSBC's card services, this has registered the highest usage and redemption of rewards points.

Exec says RP remains an 'underserved' market

No Free Lunch

Front page B2

total employment from 129 and organized employment from 102 gives an estimate of informal sector employment. This can be further categorized into the majority economic sectors based on the nature of employment reported by the survey respondents. For example, smugglers and drug pushers along with ambulant vendors will probably indicate that they derived employment from trading, while operators would describe themselves as ONOs (gasoline refineries) or waitresses, etc.

Applying average output per worker computed from the NSO data, we get an estimate of the total value of output of informal sector workers. This comes out to be 43 percent of our entire GDP, implying that confirming the measured output from the organized production sector with the estimate of informal sector output derived as described.

How accurate?

All this talk in flat contrary to common impressions, measures output from the informal sector, including from the illegal underground economy actually gets captured somehow in our GDP/GNP accounts. They are not, and cannot be measured directly the way output from the formal organized sector is, but can't be any left out.

One may question the accuracy of the estimation approach, but Meralco tells me that our own estimation methodology is considered among the best approaches around, that it has in fact been copied by other countries in the region, including India.

There is now a "New Delhi Group," he tells me, composed of statistical agencies from Asian countries who actually meet regularly instead improving the measurement of the informal economy.

Note that there is always a cross-check to the GDP measure from the spending side. Like everywhere else, NSCB also measures GDP by keeping track of expenditures arising from personal consumption, government consumption, investments, and net exports (export minus imports).

In this approach, both formal and informal economic activities are captured, as people would not distinguish between purchases from the formal and the informal sectors. The "statistical discrepancy" between GDP measured this way and that measured the other way is routinely reduced in the accounts, and is usually reduced.

So, it turns out that if our economy grew by 6.1 percent last year, we also have packing, drafts and smuggling to thank for that.

Comments welcome at chedeo@pacific.net.ph

OFW remittances surged 32% . . .

Front page B1

For the first quarter of 2005, POEA data indicated that production-related, professional/technical and service providers comprised the bulk of the deployed workers.

"Banks continue to intensify their efforts in extending banking services to overseas Filipino workers by increasing the number of remittance centers abroad, introducing innovative means of remittance transfer and establishing ties with foreign financial institutions," Tetangco said.

In a survey by the National Statistics Office in 2000, about 7.25 percent of Filipino households or approximately 1.1 million derived their main source of income from cash and other assistance from abroad.

Despite the large magnitude of these OFW flows, these cash transfers have been fueling economic growth in the past couple of years and have been partly responsible for the growth of such sectors as real estate and telecommunications.

Remittances are important in providing the economy with foreign exchange to anyone, helping ease foreign exchange liquidity constraints and contributing to a stronger balance of payments position," Tetangco said in a recent speech.

These cash transfers also contributed to increasing disposable income and thus lead to increasing consumption, which had been a consistent source of economic growth. Moreover, remittances allowed resources to be available and mobilized where investments are needed.

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LIFESTYLE

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MONDAY ARTS & BOOKS ■ TUESDAY FITNESS ■ WEDNESDAY ... BEAUTY

ROMEO'S gangster friends

LOVE'S tragic ending

Love in the time of Jolina

Tanghalang Pilipino's audacious move to drag Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet' to the Pinoy slums produces a winner

By Cibo Cadiz

"ILLNESS is an assertion of youthfulness," wrote The New Yorker theater critic John Lahr, and nowhere is this truer than in Tanghalang Pilipino's newest production, "Where Love Dew-Dares."

Cultural Center of the Philippines' resident theater company has got itself a home hit set with this show, an exhilaratingly funny pinoy adaptation of the Shakespeare classic on young love that manages to be both manic and irresistible at the same time. The voice and cheers of the mostly young crowds that have packed CCP's Tanghalang Manuel Conde since the play opened last week couldn't be any more emphatic. This survey-proof up of everything hot-chas in Pinoy society is hitting the right chords, and hers.

"Romeo and Juliet," of course, has gone to the merchants before, most famously in "West Side Story." But director Herbie Go and JP Villareal's impudent inspiration in swapping this tale of the warring Montescos and Capulets' landless no-no urban slum arms called Barangay Verona is to strip the play of its veneer of elitism.

Gone are the high-flown rhetoric, the precious verses, the struggle for an unsyllabified romantic transcendence. Too many productions have wanted to see the verbal, delirious magic of "Romeo and Juliet," but Go and Villareal's resident work bravely goes for the gutsy, the tacky, the vinegary. The result is a glorious master class on Pinoy street culture at its most pungent and picaresque.

Earthy language

First off, don't expect to hear any of Shakespeare's soaring soliloquies here. The show uses National Artist Rolando Tinio's Filipino translation in some scenes, but for the most part the earthy, colorful, little exhalations of everyday street living have taken over the fourth wood.

So a dainty portioned phrase like "What's in a name? That which we call a rose/By any other word would smell as sweet," invented by Juliet in the famous balcony scene, now has assumed a sweaty pose: "Ang mar, kahit ano pang tawag sa rosas/Mabo'ng bulok mag-iyot mag-ayaw pa rin."

Or how about Romeo's dazzling rhapsody upon seeing Juliet on the balcony?

"Hoy, sulit what light through yonder window breaks?/It is she nga, and Juliet is the sun! Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon/Who is already sick and pale with grief That thou her maid art far more fair than she."

"Where Love Dew-Dares"'s version of this goes a tickler:

"Alyan! Ano yung nagpi-glitter sa bintana makadungaw?/Oh, mine si Juliet parang araw na nakakaliwas./Sige, sulpot mo ilang ang pag-shine! Kahit pa nag-inggitan, bayla-bayla t-tambalan."

Vibrant culture

If the rhythm of the verses sounds suspiciously like rap, well, it is. Go and his team of adaptors thought Bob-Soup poetry expressed this vibrantly garish culture best, and they gleefully crawled the panoramic expanse of Pinoy phraseology to come up with a script that shouts and raps punchlines to the audience like a rumor run amuck.

The characters fly fast and furious (Juliet's nurse expression is "Eh's na malaglag!"):

(CONTINUED)

LOU Veloso plays Kapitan Boada opposite Paolo Ballesteros's Father Lorenzo.

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Cinemanila features Belgian cinema

"HYU LIFE in Pink," by Alice Berthon

THE 7TH CINEMANILA International Film Festival, the City of Manila, and the Royal Belgian Embassy in Manila, in celebration of the 175 years of Belgium, officially launched the Belgian Film Week at the Ambassador's Residence in Forbes Park South, Makati City on Aug. 6.

The Belgian Film Week, running from Aug. 17-23 at SM Megamall, is presented by Cinemanila in cooperation with the Ambassador of Belgium to the Philippines, Dr. Octaaf Tanghe. It is part of the advanced screenings of this year's 7th Cinemanila International Film Festival set Oct. 12-23.

Cinemanila festival director Anneliz "Tikoy" Aguilar, VL Ambassador Tanghe and Robert Malengreau, editor of the Belgian Diverses magazine and general director of the Brussels International Independent Film Festival, welcomed award-winning directors Chris Reitz and Lee Daw, performers Ariel Borstlap, Geraldine Villa, Bernice Liduan and Val Sienes, producer Paul Tolentino, independent filmmakers Ato Bautista, Raphael Jean Soy and Kevin Deguzman, musicians Raimon del Prado and Thian Sabanoro, Cameraman Gino Origgiolo project head Ronald Arguelles, and members of the diplomatic corps in the Belgian Embassy in attendance.

Today, Belgian cinema is one of the strongest in the world's movie industry. In more than 30 years, Belgian filmmaking has seen increasing recognition on the world stage.

Multinominee and, sitting the next century of the brothers Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne in the Cannes film festival 2005 with their second Golden Palm Palme d'Or for "Elsmar" (The Child).

The films to be screened are "Gilles' Wife" (Frédéric Fonteyne, 2004), Venice Film Festival Critic Award winner and Cannes Directors' Fortnight entry; "My Life in Pink" (Alain Berliner, 1998), Oscars Best Foreign Language Films; "Tutte the Hero" (Jaco Van Dormael, 1991), Cannes Golden Camera Award; "Le—Bellerose, Bellerose and the Deep Blue Sea" (Marion Hänsel, 1998), Cannes Golden Palm nominee and Special Mention Prize of the Academy of Italy; "The Tournament" (Hugo Claus, 1998), Amiens International Film Festival Special Jury Award for Best Feature Film, and Locarno International Film Festival Youth Jury and Critic Award winner; "Mirror (The Sick)" (Dominique Van Den Berghe, 2002), National Society of Film Critics (US) Best Foreign Language Film; and "The Promise" (Dardenne brothers, 1996), Locarno International Film Festival Golden Leopard award.

Also to be screened are "Buddies and Pinkerlot" (Lieven Debrauwer, 2001), "Steve + Sky" (Felix Van Groeningen, 2004), "Calvaire (The Orchid)" (Fabrice du Welz, 2004), and "The Kiss" (Hilde Van Mieghem).

"In this form, the Filipino people will have the occasion to discover a panorama of the already classics and the new directors of the Belgian cinema today," Malengreau said, citing the new generation of filmmakers.

"GILLES' Wife," by Frederic Fonteyne and "Toto the Hero," by Jaco Van Dormael (right)

Love in the time of Jolina

To see page 82

WOWIE in Guimaras (Benedict Cleveland Prince Conti and Carlos Matabuena (Khalil Ramos)

DEES Versoza (Mrs. Montenez), Marjorie Lorico (Tess) and Angel Bacani (Mrs. Capulong)

Poindres

But to the fun of the show's other romantic endeavor of overtaking dialogue and bodies, both sparkling, as of course, pointless. There is nothing to do but swoon hysterically at the lovers exchange such monosyllables as Mitch to "Bo'tsa, ba'bye" Majestic sums sing young people's angst by singing Gloria Gaynor's escapism in all its cry hoard. Dune, if anyone fails to get it, right after the lovers sing their theme song—Lara Fabian and Josh Groban's "Broken Vow".

Ah, yes, the music. "Wowie Lara Jean-Jean!" Dazzle with the soundtrack of the games, from the Airgo' "Ehhh" and "Lobo" to Sampaguita's "Hun Ba Lan" and every hunky freak's No. 1 song, "My Way." Now sporting the new lyrics that comment on the plot, these songs are belted out by our sensitive video-style, complete with a handsome score at the end.

Class distinctions

Any similar in camp is farce, especially one that simultaneously subverts and showers class distinctions, could just as easily lapse into condescension. In less deus-aware hands, the short stocky gentlemen of the lunch-date hunks and "Wowie Lara Jean-Jean" paparazzi to you, the classy gangsta chorus the restaurant (the vulgarity)—would be an insistence to mockery.

Fortunately, the show has a talent set transcending its more schoolboy jokes in the material claims through with every unpredictable twist to begin comedians. There is something to be said for mouthing dialogue that springs from everyday life—the ridiculous pleas supposedly sweet, few, if any, have heard of that legendary beauty.

Save the rank immediacy of the looming years hate. You wince at the vulgar dialogue of Tybalt and Romeo, but realize you've heard it somewhere before in real life.

"Wowie Lara Jean-Jean" has a real find in Reed Lucado, who plays the Lara Jean role with a fairly believable mixture of appeal and flaky energy. Celestine Racoy as Dees-Raoul is a bit more overbalanced, but his master got final recorded. Joliet's review engrossing.

Together, these two dominate the romantic lives of the show's other characters, successfully sustaining the play's tight-rope spirit of mischief and excitement right up to the end.

If they weren't tomorrow school themselves, Bernadine and Barong would have forged by now as fabulous screen-drinkers. Whoah. Regales on Juliet's rape and Cleo Parra. Cut to the nasty nipple blowjob.

Welcome, in particular, is comely relaxed ease he is dispatched each

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Spain's top flamenco dancer coming to Manila

Lidia Reina performs "Sevillas."

Lidia Reina is not just Spain's hottest flamenco dancer—she's contemporary flamenco's most famous star, literally considered an icon at the age of 34, she has been voted as the "Face of Andalusia" and even has her own package stamp.

She has also made a name for herself in theater and film-making, an astonishing jump to television and cinema and the catwalks in London, Madrid and Lisbon. She has been featured in the catalogue of Cartier Jewels.

Institute Cervantes is bringing this beautiful and talented woman to Manila for the Mitsubishi Oct. 12 as part of Fiesta 2005, the Spanish Festival for Culture and the Arts.

Reina is set to perform at Cultural Center of the Philippines in "Sueños (Dreams)," her acclaimed traditional flamenco show that made box-office history with a record breaking five straight months of sold-out performances in Madrid.

Twice honored with Spain's most prestigious dance award, the Premio Nacional de Danza, Reina has been hailed worldwide for her interpretive, brilliant choreographic and elegant style. She's known for her ability to work her audience into a frenzy with her powerful, passionate dances and undeniable hot footwork.

Reina, who learned how to dance from her mother, Concha Reina, started to excel when she joined the company of gypsy dancer Manuela Matos in 1989. She won important awards like Madrid's Flamenco de Montilla—Davillo's Grand Award—in 2002 (Spain's public television broadcasting company), and Mar prize for the Best Female Dance Performer in 1999 and 2001.

In artistic partnerships with dance greats Javier Barca, Blender Bonenvida, Antonio Gandes, El Guito and Manuel Morao, she went on to triumph in Madrid, Bara and New York, at the Apollo Expo in 1992 and the Apollo Restored Bar in 1994, and in international tour of duty.

Reina has also ventured into the world of theater, and was much acclaimed for her performance in "Bodas Impossible" (2001) and "Mariana Pineda" (2003). She was featured in "Bodas Imposible" (2001), starring Tom Cruise, in a scene that stole the show, according to critics.

Flamenco, the traditional dance style of Andalusian Gypsies, is currently experiencing a resurgent surge in popularity, fueled in no small part by the presence of dancers of Reina, who has almost single-handedly won a new audience to the genre.

Gail Washington Poe of one of her performances: "Tara Rizzo dances as if her life depended on it... Rizzo is flamenco for a new generation."

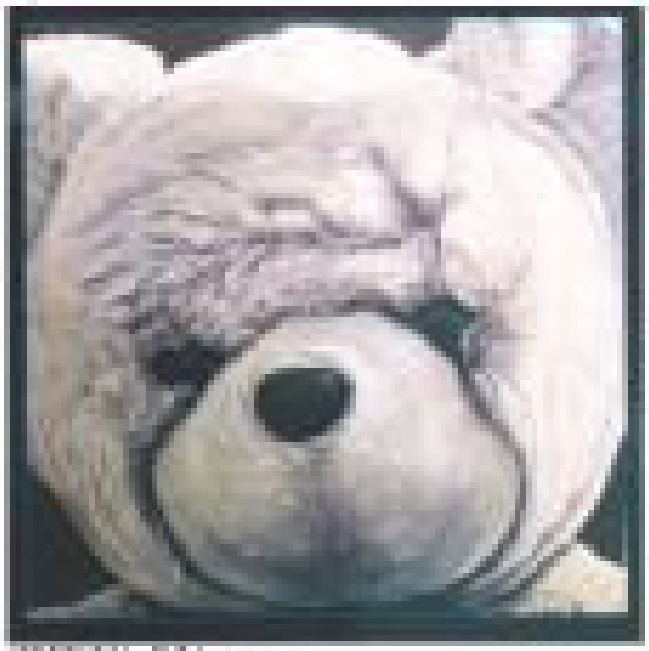
Compared with a classical ballet, with its emphasis on air and otherworldly flourishes to create mood, dress and style, Reina wipes the sweat off her brow and draws the front of her dress—she never leaves the ground.

The collaboration between musicians and dancers is crucial to the form. On stage, the musicians surround the dancers and gang up on them with sounds, wailing voices and drumming guitars with the rhythm always pushing the dancers toward the edge.

Every dance feels more passionate, even when it's off a corner of stomping her and clapping hands, of doors and dresses and dresses being swished coldly.

BOOKS on Pope Benedict XVI /C5

LIFESTYLE



"PHOTOS," by EJ Calvesbert

The art of the cute

By Constantine C. Bajos

CUTE imagery has become hip in certain quarters of the art world. Called *kawaii* by the Japanese, with images inspired by or based on animal characters, it was popularized by artists like Takashi Murakami.

But soon, with the invasion of Smiley and Hello Kitty faces and Louis Vuitton logos in the art world, commercialization is bound to happen. This is, of course, just an offshoot of the [illegible] first championed by Warhol.

To counter the effect, some artists are putting a twist to the pop-iconic images. They deconstruct, reconstruct, reinterpret them in

"THE COURTSHIP," by Reynerio Ray Arcos

Show displays unique legacy of Onib Olmedo

By Gino Dormiendo
Good Buzz

THE ARTIST died nine years ago, but judging from the outpouring of affection and respect from fellow artists, his memory lives on. Indeed, Onib Olmedo, born Luis Velicaria Olmedo in 1937, has cast his influence on a new generation of artists.

The exhibit, "Of Flowering, Remembering, and Giving Tribute: the Legacy of Onib Olmedo," is curated by Riel Hilario, who invited some 15 artists to participate in the show. Daisuke Asaquin, extended until Aug. 30).

The works ostensibly bear Olmedo's lasting influence, both in subject and mode of treatment. Olmedo, of course, was known for bold, iconic representations, a treatment which had hordes of followers and detractors alike in its lifetime years.

The show's pieces, the exhibition's notes, however, are the 14 rediscovered pieces first for the exhibit by Olmedo's private collector. Those remain mainly of portraitures, nudes, still lifes and the so-called "erotic," works that he finished during his last years on earth. These pieces are not to be regarded as ordinary portraits done in the usual media but, rather, soul portraits, of "humans trapped and distorted by anguish and suffering," as Alice Guillermo aptly describes them. "These are stories of social injustice as well as of their own tortured psyches."

Olmedo was one man who showed empathy for society's underdog. Witness his gallery of the poor and the dispossessed. He painted even the ugliness that stems from bigotry and weaknesses in the cheapskate joints.

It is interesting to note that, after an extended period of anguish and suffering, his paintings [illegible] still live. These pieces, however, came toward the end of his life, when, suffering from diabetes and other complications, he expressed the wish to be at peace with himself and the world.

Among the fine tribute in the show are Manny Garibay and Bimbo Armamento; Mark Justiniani and Lydia Velasco; Marcel Antonio and Sonia Ocampo.

Even the younger ones, who entertained in the show early after Olmedo's death in 1996, such as Vincent de Pio, Elsa Tinoco, Carlo Angelo Sumotba and Elmer Borlaza, [illegible]

"MARI," by Manny Garibay

"MAN with Violin," by Olmedo

bear his trademark figure and color, indeed, the soul-wrenching delineation of figures that seem engaged in a gripping drama in an inner universe.

Of these artists, it is Carolina who has become Olmedo's most worthy disciple, though Elmer Borlongan, who is regrettably not represented here, comes quite close, particularly in his rendering of dancers/figures.

The younger dreamers has faithfully inscribed to Olmedo's aesthetic tenet, and the mark if foreboding images of angst and misery.

I dare say however, that it is but fitting a portraitist of the most disturbing hues and body language I have witnessed, who has assimilated Olmedo's membrane of visual concerns.

The master's notes by Hilario say that Olmedo is a "unique individual" and "influential artist." But the tyrant does not really render Olmedo's true value and potential. Indeed, he's been a generation later than the master. Perhaps the introduction could have merited greater weight if it has reported the testimony of all who have been touched and enriched by Olmedo's art.

E-mail the author at ginodormiendo@yahoo.com.

Barrioquinto at West, Melencio and Sugay at Mag:Net

WEST Gallery presents Ariel de Barrioquinto's "Your Face Is as Close as Your Life Has Been" on Aug. 16. Nine Old Magazine, the artist will be the artist's latest portraits of people he once knew, including his "old self." The portraits are not realistic depictions, but modified versions of human nature, which the artist says are representations of his "ever-changing emotional states and personalities and people at social time. A multi-awarded young artist, Barrioquinto studied painting at University of Santo Tomas and recently had a solo-out show in Singapore. Call 8561384.

VISUAL ARTS

MAG:NET ARE showcases "Double Stuff" by Jed Medenilla and Cookie Duque on Aug. 16. Enter Via The Loop, 7322 Lennox Avenue, 4805-1000 Compound, Legaspi Legaspi, Makati. Medina brings into fruition symbolism in her latest show. Call 8157089.

A PHOTO exhibition of scenic destinations of the Philippines and China by the Federation of Philippine-China Friendship Associations, Inc. is open to the public until Aug. 31st the National Commission for Culture and the Arts to commemorate, Manila. The exhibit is part of the 30th anniversary of RP-China diplomatic relations.

FINALE Makati presents Juan Alcasarem's "Growing Macroscopicism" on Aug. 16-31 at the AF LeCiel Gallery, Peony Road cor. Makati Avenue. The artist uses to trace ancient things like discarded toys, kitchen and industrial parts, into his paintings. Also giving new purpose to old objects. Call 8151515/8184811.

"Land V" by Archie Perez and Gil Elan focuses on the aesthetic qualities of the environment by the two and his effect on human consciousness. The exhibit runs on Aug. 19-31 in Galerie Indra. 3/F

"WINDOW at 333 I," by Gil Elan

Urdaneta Plaza, 2139 Makati Garcia St., Makati. Call 8163888/7240822/1998004.

AYALA Museum presents the second set of the exhibition "Passion-ate Eyes: Federico Aguilar Alcuaz" until Sept. 4 at the ground floor gallery. Call 7577737.

FINALE Art Gallery presents Patrong Awarding's "Anonymity" on Aug. 16-30 at 1M Magazine 4. The curated element in the photographs is a mural mirror held up to the faces of Awarding's subjects, people he encounters in the streets of the city. When light hits the mirror it obliterates the face of the person. Hence, the subject becomes anonymous. Call 8154541/8184511.

ART 1996 Exhibits Isabelino Sugay's new works in "Clouds" on Aug. 19-Sept. 13 in the Drawing Room, Mercantile Building, 3000 Metropolitan Ave., Makati. The works focus on social realism. Call 8184888/8815911.

"COWBOY" from Hell and Kin of Death," by Andres Barrioquinto

FINALE Art Fair presents Japan Biennale's "Ephesus" on Aug. 24-Sept. 5 at SM Megamall Art Center. The images are taken from seven cities, temples, amphitheaters, gift catalogs, dictionaries, science journals and the artist's past works. Call 6344814/6346911.

AYALA Museum features an exhibition of rare 19th-20th century costumes and accessories adorning style, a gossamer handwoven fabric made from the fibers of abaca, jusi and jusi. These [illegible] museum's art and heritage. Included in Ayala Museum have the permanent collection of Filipiniana first, Ayala Museum is at Makati Ave. cor. Dela Rosa St., Makati. Call 7577111 to 20.

THE SILVERS PHOTO Gallery will hold the lecture "Shooting for Glossies: On Magazine Photography (and How to Get Published)" on Aug. 20, 2-5 p.m. Alex Dragon at ASAP-CMS Publishing Inc. and photographer Jojo Rodriguez will be the panel of speakers. Call 8819881.

JAPANESE HOUSEWIVES artist Yasuhiro Hayashi will hold a one-day lecture-demo and workshop on pottery on Aug. 25, 9 a.m.-5 p.m., at Art Informal, 2/F Greenbelt 5, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 7258151/8159858/2120213/8158258/1321.

"PORTRAIT," by Kreskin Sugay

Manila artists hold group show in San Francisco, New York City

MANILA envoys Ambassador Rafael A. Gonzalez, Julius Limpe, ALI Peres and Georgy Ng will hold group shows in San Francisco and New York City from Aug. 19-24, and from Aug. 29-Sept. 3, respectively.

Gonzalez, since retiring from the foreign service in 1992 to become a full-time painter of note, is known for his semi-abstract paintings depicting themes in simple and well-disciplined lines using a vivid array of colors. He has exhibited his paintings at the Philippine Art Center in New York, the Corcoran in Brooklyn Museum, artworks in Berlin, and, most recently, in Makati at the Ayala Museum.

Limpe, an Indiana University graduate and past president of the Filipino-American cultural companies, has devoted the last 15 years or the arts to become known for his expressionist renditions of fishes, flowers and animals in different media, mainly acrylic and oil pastel.

Peres, trained in the University

"PAOAY Church, Ilocos," by Peres

AL Peres, George Ng, Raffi Gonzalez and Julius Limpe

of Santo Tomas School of Fine arts and School of Visual Art in New York, is a world-awarded and well-traveled artist. His works, known for the artist's meticulous and realistic rendition of old churches, have been exhibited in Europe, Asia and US cities.

Ng, well-known in local circles as an art professor at one of the Catholic universities, is a Chinese-born Filipino with a remarkable sense of native appreciation of his country so apparent in his oil paintings.

The group's San Francisco exhibits at the Philippine Center Building at 447 Sutter St. is sponsored by the Philippine Trade and Investment Center, Department of Tourism and Filipino-American Art Exposition.

The group show will be brought to New York City on Aug. 29 at the Philippine Center at 5th Ave. by World Master Real Estate Developments Corporation, Dimensia Limousines, Inc., and patrons in the East Coast.

The art of the cute

Viewpoint C2

Have you ever been [illegible] And as the art of Murakami is subverted by fellow Japanese such as Hana Yoshimoto and Ayako Sakata.

A leading postmodernist Filipino artist working in this area is Mel de Leon. He collects dozens of mass-produced images, reproduces them then retouches each with fine pencil touch of Mona Lisa.

His latest investment was recently displayed in "Kamishow," five pieces in acrylic on paper, in Galleria Duemila in the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, 104 Magsaysay, Mandaluyong City.

Here he has appropriated familiar Hollywood movie storyboards, rendering the blown-up pieces in pastel washes and bold lines, violently juxtaposed them and added some morbid touches. The effect is jarring, as if comfort food had turned into horror medicine.

Blackest humor

The artist chooses to highlight the most agonizing parts of the stories, and the images he has reproduced he accompanies with appropriately unsettling video taken from the same "What's the Matter, Sobol Blue?," "The Situation Room," "Dr. Strangelove," "The Situation Room," "Dr. Strangelove," "Everyone Was Amazed to See That the Bottom Part of Poor Connie's Dress Was Gone!," "Goodbye and Thank You, Said the Polite Lobster to the Pregnant Wendy."

As if the fairy tales were not terrifying enough, Dr. Love produces further dark gallery-gore into a world of leering pedophiles, killing mushrooms, a girl hammering a squirrel, a ball stuffing a boy's crotch. (Ammunition, indeed.)

The artist says he uses in these look-it-has-been-scanning "mushroom, sausage and bacon," "wrapping out the "horror and blackness" in him.

"Instead of fear, doubt and uneasiness led to some of my mature feelings," he says. "They were a product of my exposure to witches, ghosts and monsters."

To visualize the change of attitude and transformation of feeling, he washes each piece with raw sets of images—the original, and from his childhood gloomed and in monochrome, layered with the looming one from his adulthood in color.

The artist is just giving the one a dose of his own medicine. In the process, he has transformed himself into artist art.

Visual deception

Just as unsettling is to transformation of the innocuous into the sinister in the art of Elmer John Cabangon in his recent works. In the last, he robbed the children of their toys.

Witness his bronzen performances of rabbit and reception in "Hidden Hobbled," six pieces in oil on canvas, until Aug. 23 in The Big 8 Small Art Co. also at the Artwalk.

The exhibit's title must be referring to that shop of trinkets in the mall, as the glowing objects shown are the kind that can be found in that place patronized by teenagers. The resolution of each object, we must say, is a triumph of representation.

Photorealist paintings have a persona appeal. They subvert one's sense of reality. The images appear quite real (as reproductions of reality) and the viewer is elated on finding they're not just as exact copy).

The success of pieces in this regard is the initial gullibility exercised with the admiration for the artist's skill.

This art of extremely fine detail employing the illusion of tactile and spatial qualities used to be called trompe l'oeil, but this outside old fashioned now for the kind of supermodel images being produced nowadays.

We've seen hyperrealism being subverted in Nona Garcia's knickknacks, or deliberately made to distort in Ronald Ventura's subterranean nudes, or used as celebration by artist Jeffrey Hidalgo in his [illegible] toy technique in Investments' landscapes and still lifes.

Cabangon's is something else. He has created a child's world of cheap nuclear decals and striking colors (chiefly primary, darker of secondary), and one grey monochromes, yet a shadowy quality radiates every image.

Sinister images

They look sinister precisely because of the gloss and lighting in the compositions, a kind of kitsch by characters, along with a wrapping of image that indicates disaster: photos, faces are glitter images of toys, but it's as if we're seeing Chuckie sharpening his knife.

"Hush" 1-2 are close-cropped images of glass marbles. The swirling patterns of color point to alternation, but the white highlights emphasize the objects' solidity and glassiness. The wrapping adds an illusion of volume to the objects and induces a feeling of suffocation and vertigo on the viewer.

"The Star" and "Storming" show a stuffed-toy gorilla and clown puppets bundled in a corner to stimulate a fun scene or circus act. The shimmering casts them in such light that their images look tarnished.

"The Bird" is foregrounded with an incised drawing of a yellow bird with red bill while in the background eight ballerinas do distorted leaps. The drawing is cartoonish, but with its eyes askew and its look looking like a pair of scissors, one wonders if it's a bird of prey.

"Trolls," the only self-titled piece in the exhibit, is the most unnerving of the lot. It's just the face of a teddy bear in extreme close-up of gray monochrome, but precisely because of the tightness of the image it appears menacing.

Cabangon's solo exhibit, "Painting at Philippine Women's University: He has been selected to the Shell and Metrobank national art competitions.

"DEVELOPING Was Amazed to See That the Bottom Part of Poor Connie's Dress Was Gone," by [illegible]

"JAMMING," by Cabangon

LIFESTYLE

A Pope of surprises

By Lito B. Zulueta

When Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger emerged as pope after the fourth balloting in the conclave of April 19, his election was met by both relief and dismay. Relief because the conclave chose an old hand to steer the Church after the generation-breaking papacy of John Paul II, already called The Great by worldwide acclamation even before he was buried. And dismay because Ratzinger had earned enemies as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the doctrinal enforcer of the Church that had famously been known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition, which burned alleged witches and excommunicated heretics. The latter reaction was best represented by Leonardo Boff, the former Franciscan who left the priesthood after he was sanctioned by Rome for his Marxism-laced brand of liberation theology. "The sexism of the Church will continue," he said of the election.

As John Allen shows in "The Rise of Benedict XVI" (Doubleday, 2005, 249 pages), Ratzinger was a shoo-in for the pope's seat before he entered the conclave. While the book is a dramatic reading for its account of the last days of John Paul II's losing battle against his infirmities, his heroic efforts to suffuse in himself the suffering Christ to a world where suffering is anathema, and his aides keeping up a brave front until his spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, broke down in tears after announcing the Pope was beyond medical hope), it is also fascinating for detailing Ratzinger's ascendancy among the populist cause without him wanting it. According to Allen, Ratzinger's loving homily during the Pope's funeral Mass and his powerful speech decrying "the dictatorship of relativism" when the conclave opened sealed his fate as papal successor.

It helped that Ratzinger had vocal supporters among the cardinals, such as Christoph Schonborn, the Dominican archbishop of Vienna who was his former student at Regensburg and who was general editor of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. But as Allen shows, there was an attempt by the liberal wing to put up an opponent to the Ratzinger juggernaut in the person of Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, the retired Jesuit archbishop of Milan. But the opposition never gathered steam since Martini was suffering from Parkinson's disease. The fact that the conclave wrapped up its work swiftly should indicate that it was a no-contest from the start.

Two other books—Mario Bardacke's "In the Vineyard of the Lord: The Life, Faith and Teachings of Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict XVI" (Loyola International Publications) and Stephen Mansfield's "Pope Benedict XVI: His Life and Mission" (Lion's Tandem/ Pro-quest)—complement Allen's book in showing Ratzinger's formidable papal qualifications. They show that even before he came to Rome, Ratzinger had a dazzling reputation as a theologian and thinker. He was even a best-selling author whose writings and speeches were noted for their felicity of style, pronouncements of thought and lucidity of expression.

From liberal to conservative

A peritus in the Second Vatican Council, Ratzinger was behind a number of reformist interventions that earned him a reputation as a liberal theologian together with then Hans Kung and Edward Schillebeeckx, who were also theological advisers in the council. But the three soon parted ways, especially after the student riots of 1968, which shocked Ratzinger and compelled him to sound the alarm against the excesses of the Council and the secular illusions for a "utopian... the only dogma that inspired thought and action." Against what he considered as a blind drive to praxis for the sake of praxis, he insisted on the old Catholic instinct: "We need to show that Catholicism bears the benefits of the past and the future, even if it does so against the times."

But even if Ratzinger comes to the papacy as a conservative force, he may yet surprise us. Although at 78 he is an old Pope, one who is looked upon merely as a transition to the long papacy of his predecessor, he won't take it easy. "Benedict XVI, whatever else history may eventually say of him, will not preside over a pontificate of small plans," Allen writes.

Surprise papal name

To be sure, Ratzinger surprised everyone with his choice of papal name. The name shows he wants to be an apostle for peace in a divided world, as well as a guardian of orthodoxy who would draw initiatives from the writings of traditional Catholicism even if those initiatives may be considered not modern enough, or even dangerously divisive.

"My guess is that he chose Benedict XV as his name in reference to Benedict XI, who was the pope during the First World War," said Fr. Pedro Gomez, Dominican theologian of the Pontifical University of Santo Tomas in Manila. "Benedict XV was a peacemaker, a pope who was very much opposed to extreme nationalism. So I think Benedict XVI will be a Pope of peace in a divided world."

Born in 1927, Ratzinger was close to the age of Benedict XV (1914-1922), whose first four years and two months in the papacy were the years of the Great War. In 1917, Benedict XV condemned the war, urging that "the fundamental point should be that for the material favor of arms should be substituted the moral force of the law."

Then, the new Pope, ascending to Geneva, would insist "the publishing of God," especially to a Europe that "has become more and more indifferent to God." As he is hostile in the papal funeral Mass showed, the new Pope deplores that "sheer arrogance" is respect for truth, which is shrouded easily by materialism and individualism."

European vision

But the name Benedict is also derived from the saint who founded the Benedictine order, whose monasteries became enclaves of peace and conservation during much of the ravages of the Dark Ages. Historians ascribe the survival of the Church and indeed, of Western civilization, during those times when Europe was being overrun by the

A POPE, 13

Papal books say 'Papa Ratzi's' won't be a 'pontificate of small plans'

Filipinos are among world's most avid readers

Reading is not a lost art in the Philippines—this was indicated by the results of a recent survey conducted on 50,000 consumers over the age 13 in 30 countries.

In the 2005 World Culture Score Index, Filipinos ranked third as the world's most avid readers (reading 7.6+ hours a week), trailing closely after the Indians (10.7 hours) and the Chinese (8 hours), and beating Americans (2.8th at 5.7 hours), Poles (28th at 5.3 hours) and Japanese (29th at 4.3 hours) by a large margin.

The results of the survey confirm what local publishers have been observing: Filipinos are developing a greater appreciation for reading. More and more bookstores are opening, the magazine industry is steadily rising, and there is a bigger demand for reading materials in the Philippines' native tongue.

The Manila International Book Fair (MIBF) celebrates its 20th year with the theme "It's Hip to Read." Slated Aug. 31-Sept. 4 at the World Trade Center, Pasay City, MIBF once again unites local and foreign publishers, wholesalers, retailers, book lovers and collectors, librarians, authors, publishers' representatives, and every major player in the publishing industry in its continuing efforts to promote books and reading.

The book fair is organized by Primetrade Arts, Inc., in partnership with Asian Catholic Publishers, Inc.; Book Development Association of the Philippines; Philippine Booksellers Association, Inc.; and Publishers Representatives Organization of the Philippines, Inc. It is supported by the Philippine Educational Publishers Association; Book Importers Association of the Philippines; and Christian Booksellers Association-Philippine Chapter.

(Call 8920063 or 8924842. E-mail bookfair@primetrade.com)

Ria Alava
National Arts for Literature

"Reading is good exercise for the eyes and the mind. Books most, especially as good for the mental health."

Bam Aquino
National Youth Commission chairman

"Reading is interesting, enriching and enriching. It can ground you as reality or help you escape. In both cases, it sets you free. Reading is essential to a person's growth, as [opposed] to a person's development. It makes a person engaging and attractive. It's the ultimate turn-on, the girl that keeps on giving!"

Chico Garcia
88.9 FM

"It's hip because you're a step in front of the rest of the pack. Everyone's searched the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy, but how many people do you know read it?"

James Campos
Head, public relations, Globe Telecom

"Reading pursuits a movie blockbuster. It keeps you smiling and totally sweet all throughout the screening, just munching away at the popcorn on hand."

Lisa Macuja-Elizalde
Prima ballerina

"It's not to read but because you can transform into anything and anyone you want or dream of becoming. You can go to any place you want to be. You can learn about any subject you want to learn about. You can change your very being. Just think about all that power!"

Kip Oebanda
Founder, Child Laborers Advocates for Social Participation, Ten Outstanding Students of the Philippines (TOSP) awardee

"It's hip to read because you can learn interesting things, like how to be hip or how to shape your hips. You can even read about learning how to read. There are so many blessings in reading, but the most important of them all is the ability to experience another person, another world and another reality in the comfort of your room."

Joseph Patrick Echevarria
Valedictorian, Ateneo de Manila University Batch 2005 and TOSP awardee

"When I was 12, my father used to read to me stories about Alice in Wonderland. Then, "The Call of Amontillado." More than 10 years later, I can still see Fortunato following the flickering flame, going deeper and deeper into the catacombs... Reading exposes the imagination and allows us to witness whole lives, centuries of experiences, and even visions of the future. And it is often through these that we learn what it means to love, to yearn, to hope—what it means to be human. It is one of those rare arts that not only make us feel alive, but also make us better people."

Arnold Clavio
Broadcaster

"Because you can create a world you want to be (in) inside us for a moment long. You can be a hero or a villain without any worries as how people will judge you. Anyway, work knowledge-wise, it's a good mind-exercise that might help prevent you from having Alzheimer's disease."

Marian Catedral
Cultural Philo., policy, government and public affairs head

"It's cool to be seen alone in a restaurant while reading a book. Reading is the benchmen of one's future success."

Barge Ramos
Fashion designer

"It's hip and cool to read because reading keeps you updated, inspired, intrigued and always with a sense of wonder about people, God and the world around us."

Irene Ruth
Head, public relations, Cultural Center of the Philippines

"Reading opens new avenues of reflection which makes one a better person."

Ramon Rocha III
CEO, Chiff Interiors

"Reading not only develops a person's intelligence, it broadens one's perspectives as well, allowing the reader to envision new different worlds, step into the lives of the characters, and share their experiences and emotions. Leaders are readers. One cannot go very far without reading, and by cultivating a love for reading, we develop a healthy nation and intelligent population."

Gerard Salonga
Composer-conductor

"Reading is no one's mind and soul as nothing can at the gym is to one's body. Our bodies fade and fall apart, but a powerful mind lasts much longer. Reading happens to be the best exercise with a rich and and a powerful mind."

Peachy Guingab
Manager, public relations, ABS-CBN

"Reading is a great way to enhance one knowledge. It can entertain us mentally and keeps us in touch with society, to local and foreign, places and culture. Besides, reading is the most hands-free way to go to your favorite destination. You don't even have to leave the comfort of your home. You just have to use your imagination."

Pinoy Alcaraz
Children's book illustrator

"Reading makes you smarter and increases your vocabulary. It opens up your mind and feeds your imagination."

Marvin Agustin
Actor

"Because it's good for the soul to read every day. I believe that if I teach with the things I already know and not open myself up to other people, then I will for sure stagnate and deprive myself of the fulfillment of learning."

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Our Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary turns 50

OLM Lady of Guadalupe Minor Seminary, the archdiocesan seminary of Manila, will mark its 50th foundation anniversary on Aug. 21-22 with the theme "A Heart That Prays... A Heart That Serves: Towards a 50 Years of Serving the Youth as Servant Leaders of Filipino Christian Communities."

Highlights of the two-day festivity are the Eucharistic celebrations to be officiated by Archbishop Antonio Franco, D.D., apostolic nuncio in the Philippines, on Aug. 21, 6 p.m., and by Manila Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales, on Aug. 22, 11 a.m. Both Masses will be held at the seminary chapel.

Expected to spice up the homecoming is the variety show on Aug. 21, 8 p.m., to be top-billed by the alumni, priests and seminarians. This will be directed by multi-awarded TV and film director Marjo L. delos Reyes, an alumnus of the seminary.

There will be a special performance on Aug. 22 at 1 p.m. of the Lobo Children's Choir under music director Augusto "Lobo" Alino an alumnus.

Former administrators, academic and non-academic personnel, and alumni, especially the golden jubilarians (Class 1950) and silver jubilarians (Class 1980), are enjoined to attend, according to Fr. Rolando Aquino, seminary rector.

Call 8916464.

A Pope of Surprises

(Turn to page A2)

others from the north, to the monks who copied countless ancient manuscripts and kept them in libraries, which later became the guidebooks for philosophical and scientific advancement during the medieval ages, when the Church achieved its golden age.

To be sure, Benedict XVI has indicated he would try to reaffirm the Christian roots of Western civilization amid the tide of secularism which may yet be a point for atheism and anti-clericalism. Thus, he is expected to rebuild the Church in Europe while making sure it is consolidated elsewhere in the world and strengthening ecumenical programs with other churches and religions.

Allen's and Bernhart's books are particularly helpful in raising the thoughts of Ratzinger that may not necessarily be positive. Since Benedict XVI will carry out his papacy. He is the man to strike while the iron is hot, the books have run into editorial shipdash. In Allen's book, there is this framed sense of tension: "In the past, when the Pope has been hospitalized, rapt recordings have been made of his groanings in case he was unable to dictate or delivering these live, and then his condition was improved shortly beforehand to determine if the tape was necessary." Bernard says that Schillebeeckx, like Kung, was "censured" and "disciplined" for his Christology. This is not correct. The Hermann Dembowski case is more complex but the Roman inquisition severed times, but he has never been sanctioned. He remains in the good grace of the Church and at 90, is still writing and living the life of a theologian monk and scholar in the Netherlands. But all of this is forgivable since the books are packed with helpful information and interesting insights.

In the end, the three books provide readers a multi-dimensional appreciation of the mind and spirit of Benedict XVI. They show that the new pope is open to change while in full command of two millennia of Catholic tradition and thought that empower him to separate the chaff from the grain. To be sure, some papers his entire borders on the number and the cloth as he has expressed willingness to see the Catholic majority go in the face of secularism and Gentilecentrism for a "creative minority" who could animate the task, evincing the dark Augustinian bias of his theology on apathy, say, the Dominicans Thomas Aquinas's belief that eternity looks at the world, wants and all, as redeemable by grace. The papal mine of mixed materials as of Julian Green's 1941 reflection: "Is it possible that the day may come when the truth will be represented by a few thousand persecuted Catholics, having as their head a little old man in white cassock who will be hidden away in some catacomb? When the Sun of Man returns on earth, do you think he will find faith there?"

Benedict XVI is clearly an incorrigible spirit. But he is also not a debunker. He is prepared to dig in, like the sun fortress that is the Church, and spring a surprise.

The books are available at Powerbooks and Sectional Bookstore.